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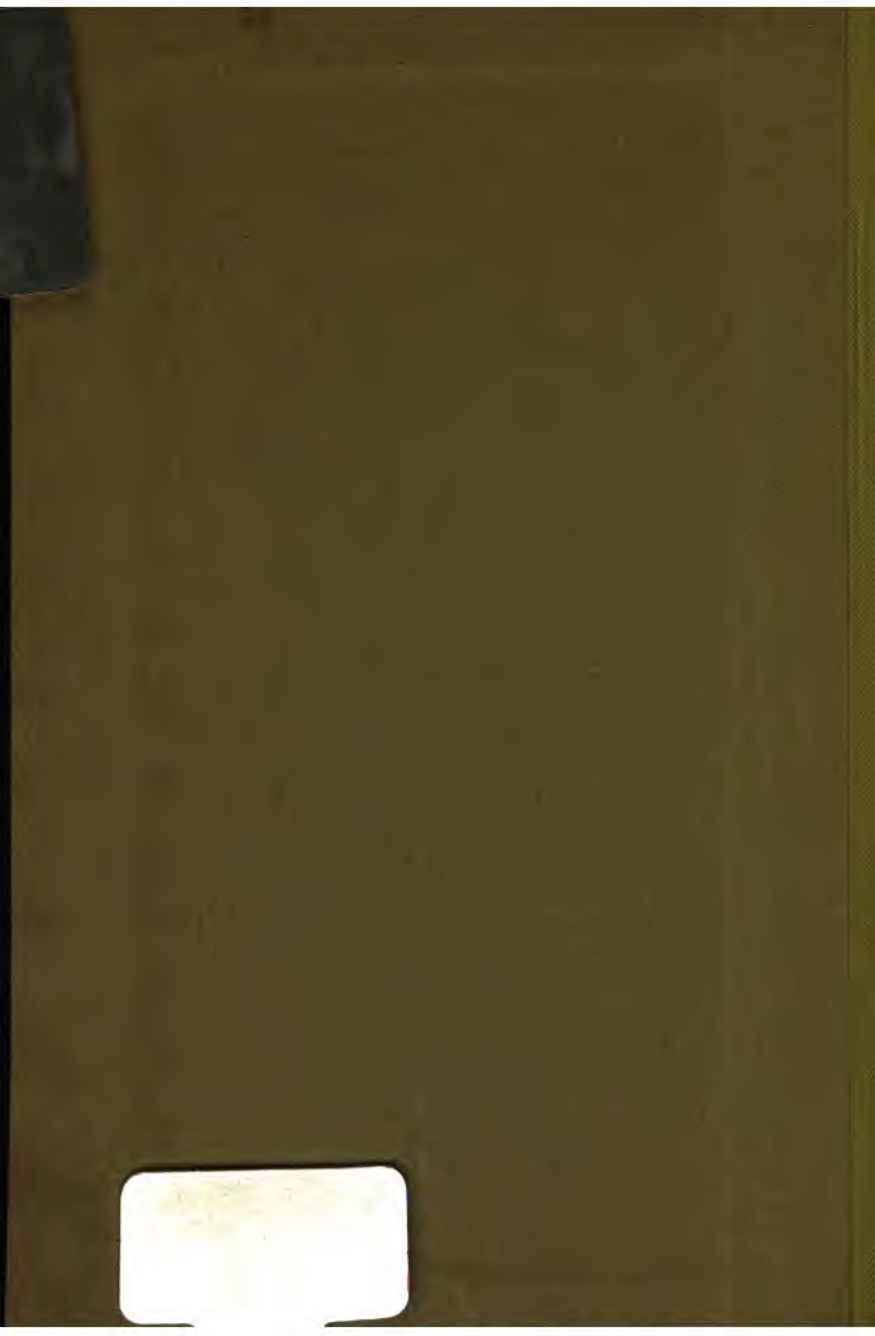
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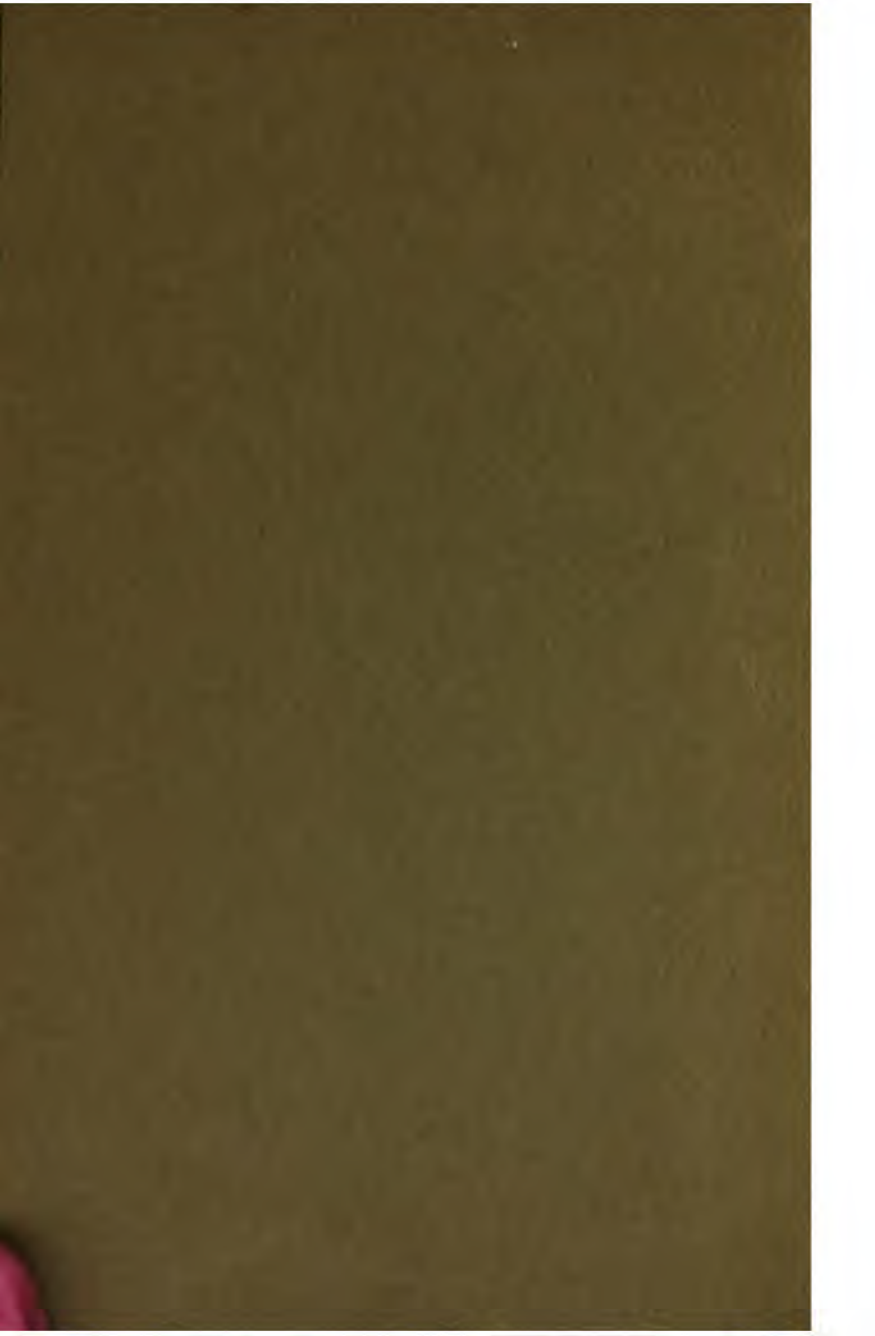
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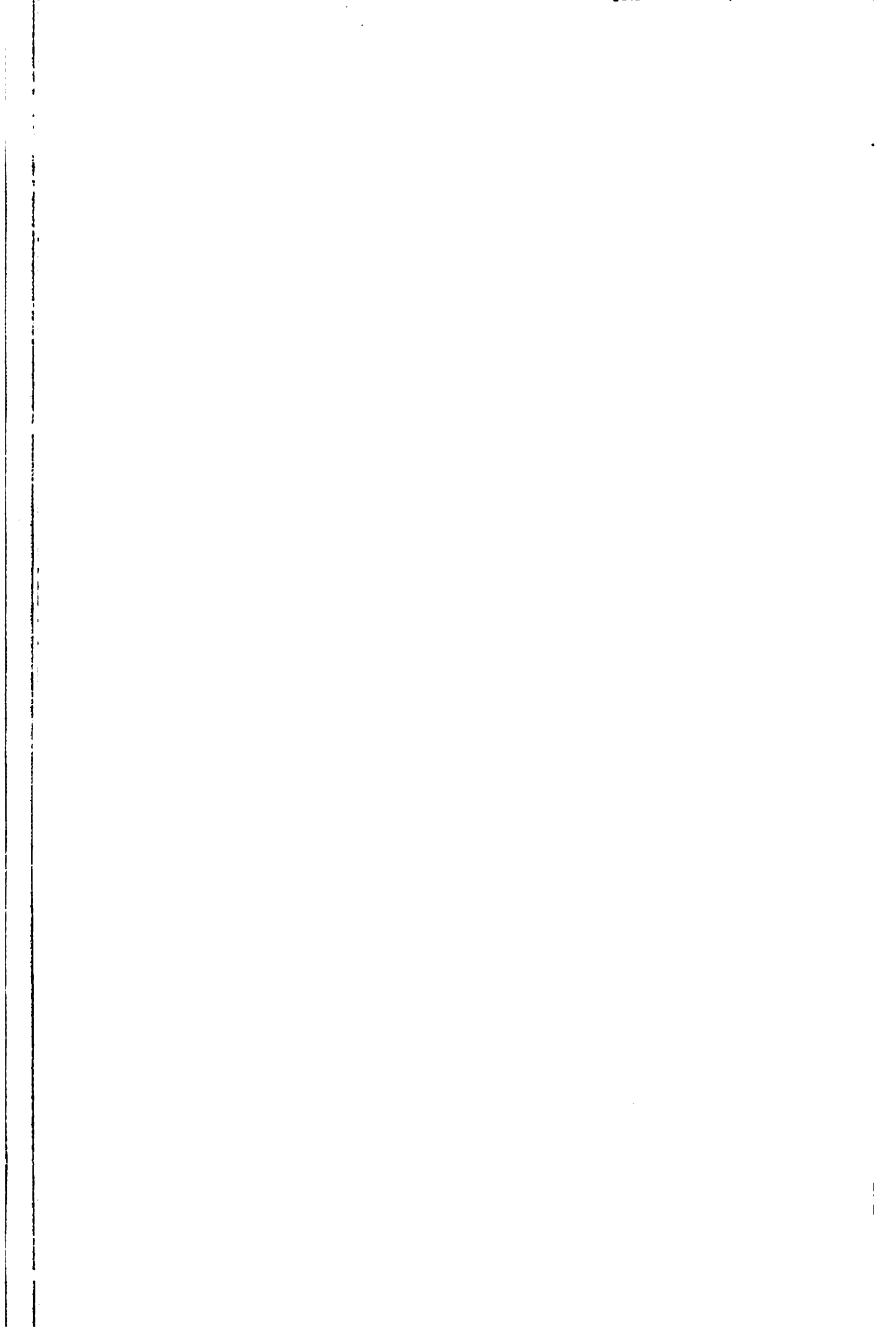
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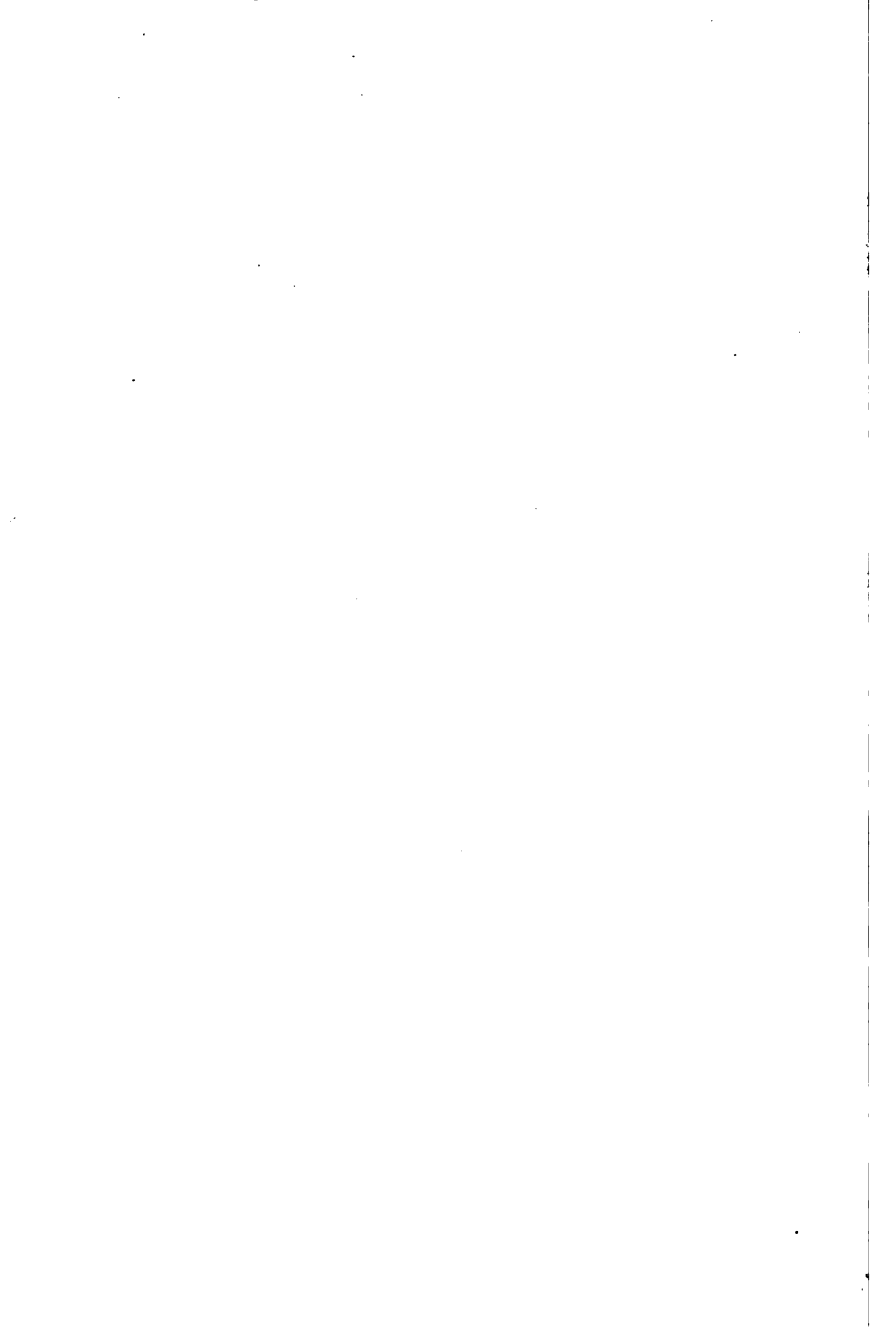
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IRON COUSINS

W. A. G. W. W. W.
NEW

1
"He wants wit, that wants resolved will
To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better—"

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IRON COUSINS

BY

MRS. ALFRED SIDGWICK

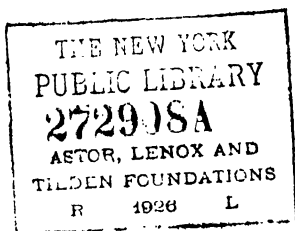
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"SALT OF THE EARTH," "THE DEVIL'S CRADLE,"
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IRON COUSINS

I

I WAS brought up by my Aunt Susan. I could not remember much about my father and mother because they sent me back to England when I was five and remained in India themselves until they died, a year or two later. Aunt Susan was my mother's only sister and her name was Darrell. My father's name was Danvers and Aunt Susan told me when I came to years of discretion that his people had disapproved of his marriage. I naturally asked why.

"The Danvers had money and we had none," said Aunt Susan. "They objected to us and I objected to them. I was as anxious to prevent the marriage as they were, but nothing could be done."

She sighed.

"What happened?" I asked.

"They ran away together," she said under her breath. "It was very wrong."

"I don't see anything wrong about it," I argued.

"What else could they have done?"

"Waited; or given each other up."

"I don't think."

Aunt Susan looked at me suspiciously. I was not allowed to use slang and as a rule I obeyed the law,

but sometimes the argot of the moment will say more in three words than a well turned phrase would in twenty. Every generation discovers this and Aunt Susan herself had told me that when she was at school she had been fined for telling another girl at croquet to paddle her own canoe.

"I should love an adventure," I went on rather hurriedly. "If I had been born a hundred years ago I would have been married at Gretna Green."

Aunt Susan dropped the subject and went on with her knitting. She never encouraged talk about love and marriage and I had grown up without thinking over-much of either. I had been to a day-school and made some friends there, but when I left school I could not go out into the world because my aunt's means were small. We lived in the smallest house in the smallest square in Chelsea and everything in the house was beautifully kept, but old, and, as regards carpets, threadbare. We thought a great deal of ourselves, though, in our old-fashioned way, and though I had never been expressly told that the Darrells were a better family than the Danvers, I somehow knew it.

"The Danvers, my dear, were in trade," said Aunt Susan. "Cotton."

"Reels of cotton?"

"No. Calico. But that is long ago. They call themselves landowners now."

I was rather interested in the Danvers but I never could get Aunt Susan to say much about them. She told me that I had an uncle living at a place called Whincliffe, that he was a purse proud disagreeable man, and that though he knew of my existence he had never shown any desire to see me.

"You are his brother's only child; so you may judge for yourself what kind of people they are. However, luckily you need not be beholden to them." I may say here that I never have been and that I have never yet set eyes on any of my father's relatives.

"I should love to earn my own living and be beholden to no one," I said one day soon after my twentieth birthday. "Every able-bodied man and woman should."

Aunt Susan closed her mouth in a way I understood meant disagreement. I wish I could show her to you in a mirror instead of trying to describe her in words, most of them as defaced by use as coins long in circulation. She was of middle height, spare of body and neat looking. Her gray eyes were shrewd and her skin, though wrinkled, was still fine and delicately colored. She sat upright in her chair as her grandmother had taught her to do and she was usually occupied with her needle. Sir Walter Scott was her novelist. She would read a modern novel with avidity and pronounce it trumpery when she came to the end. But she always read to the end. Some modern novels did not come our way. Once when one did she called it garbage. Another she burned ceremoniously. She was a woman of strong opinions and said she hoped she would always know good from evil. She was born in 1850, but many of her ways and ideas belonged to an older time and as they were all fed to me in my youth, I occasionally find myself behind my generation. At least Isabella David told me I was when I refused to become a militant suffragette and go out with a hammer.

The Davids live in Hampstead now, in Fitzjohns

'Avenue, but when I made friends with Isabella they lived in Chelsea and we went to the same school. The first time I asked Aunt Susan if I might bring Isabella back with me to tea she hesitated.

"What is the child's name?" she inquired.

"Isabella David."

"Are they Welsh then?"

"No. They are foreigners. At least the parents are."

My aunt gave the slight inarticulate sound that expressed want of sympathy rather than disapproval. However, I was allowed to ask Isabella to tea, and when she had gone my aunt said that she seemed a clever child but that she gave her opinion too freely. In due course I was asked to tea at the Davids and came back thrilled by the size and splendor of their house and the generosity of Mrs. David who gave me a big box of chocolates when I bid her good-by. That was the beginning of a friendship that I still hope will be life-long for, though I have always disagreed with Isabella, I have always liked her. The Davids' house and the people who gathered there let me into a world I should not otherwise have known: a mixed world of monied men and artists, all with ideas, ways and features that I did not see at home. Many nationalities met at that house and I have known Sunday evenings there that reminded me of the Tower of Babel. It was queer, but interesting, and the chief effect on me was to make me want to go abroad under any circumstances and at almost any price. There was an ugly little Hungarian who seemed to admire me very much and I should certainly have married him if I had had the chance, because he lived at

Vienna. Luckily he did not give me the chance but, after courting me assiduously all through one winter, went home in the spring and married his cousin. I got the impression that if I thought the David *milieu* foreign it had just the same feeling about me. I received a warm welcome but I remained a stranger amongst them, especially as regards marriage. Isabella had brothers and sisters older than herself, and in turn each one of these married. She used to tell me quite openly what the financial arrangements were in each case and even who paid for the furniture and linen; and one day when the little Hungarian had been markedly attentive she asked me if I thought my aunt would give me a dowry.

"Certainly not," I said. "She can hardly make two ends meet as it is."

"What a pity!" said Isabella.

"Englishmen do not expect a dowry with their wives," I said, not that I knew much about it, but I had heard the point discussed in this very house.

"I was not thinking of Englishmen," said Isabella. "If your aunt would have given you a dowry you might have married someone of a different nationality."

"I want to go abroad," I admitted, "but I might not want to stay there."

We were both about seventeen at that time and Isabella still thought of marriage as the one and only course for women. I can hardly tell you when she changed her opinion and became so violently opposed to it that she rejected a *parti* her parents were anxious for her to accept. In the David household an eligible young man was always talked of as a *parti* and Herr

Eichthal who lived in Berlin had come to London on purpose to make Isabella's acquaintance and propose to her. I did not like him. He was short and florid; he had curly black hair, and he wore a diamond ring. He was both conceited and obsequious and said silly rude things about England and the English. But he was the only son of wealthy parents and Isabella told me that if she married him she would have magnificent pearls and diamonds and a large flat in a fashionable part of Berlin. Great excitement prevailed in the David family while Herr Eichthal paid his visit. The married sons and daughters came and went, family festivals were arranged, everyone connected with the Davids sang Herr Eichthal's praises and pressure was exerted on all sides to bring Isabella to her senses. But when Herr Eichthal actually made his offer she refused him point blank and gave as a reason to her friends that he had nigger lips. They were all very angry and so was Herr Eichthal. In fact he went off to Berlin in a huff although Mr. and Mrs. David both said that if only he would have a little patience they would make Isabella see reason. Their argument was that the young man could not help his lips and that his income would insure her happiness, for they were most affectionate parents and wished their children to be happy. But the young people were both determined—the man to take offense and the girl to let him go. The affair was an eight days' wonder in Isabella's little world and soon after, to my surprise, she was allowed to go to India for a year as governess to a little boy, the only child of intimate friends. Mrs. David told me that when a girl had got herself talked about, it was well for her to be away for a time and

that Isabella's position in India would be that of a friend and not of a governess. I could not see why Isabella should be banished for a year because she had taken a dislike to Herr Eichthal's nigger lips, but Mrs. David said that unfortunately her daughter had not made up her mind at once and that for at least a week the whole community had looked on the young couple as engaged. At any rate, there had been more talk and surmise than was pleasant and Isabella had always wanted to see the world.

"So do I," I said. "I wish I could go to India!"

Mrs. David looked at me thoughtfully.

"Must it be just India?" she asked, and I answered vaguely that I had not set my heart on India but would go anywhere abroad if I got the chance. I spoke without thinking seriously that I should get it and without much consideration for Aunt Susan.

II

I HAVE told you a little about the Davids and Isabella because I am sure that half unconsciously Isabella's year in India had an influence on my own adventure out of England. I became accustomed to the idea that a girl might have a sheltered home and yet, for one reason or the other, decide to leave it for a time, and this idea was supported by my conviction that I ought to earn my bread if I could. For there was no doubt that in order to maintain me Aunt Susan had to deny herself, and the older she grew the less I liked to see her doing it.

Isabella came back from India in the spring of 1912 and I now found that she was more violent than ever about the rights, or rather the wrongs, of women. It was then that she discovered how old-fashioned and reprehensible my views were and for a time she dropped me. Mrs. David did not. She often asked me to Hampstead partly, I believe, in the vain hope that I should turn Isabella from her present ways. But you cannot turn a person who wears mental blinkers. Isabella looked neither to right nor to left but followed her leaders. She said what they said, did what they did, thought what they thought, in the traditional feminine way. This made her an exasperating companion, especially as she gave herself airs

although she was behaving like a parrot. Her parents bore with her in the kindest way. Mr. David was a very intelligent, rather silent man who would often express what he felt by a little shrug or an ironical light in his eye. He had a good deal of sympathy with the militant women I believe, though he would never admit this to his daughter. Probably he guessed that she was only a parrot and not even a steadfast one. Mrs. David worried about the dangers her daughter incurred and the probable effect of prison life on her health if ever she went to prison. None of us foresaw the amazing *volte-face* she would perform and which was occasioned partly by a quarrel with her superiors and partly by the coming of Mr. Ernest Schlösser. You might think from his name that he was a German. I made that mistake and gave great offense to the whole David family. Mr. Schlösser was English, everything that was most English, and I was not to forget it. Isabella had met him in India and had been attracted, but the time was not ripe perhaps. At any rate he had not spoken there and he did speak here and from that moment all went merry as a marriage bell in Fitzjohn's Avenue. The inappreciative militant leaders who had seemed to have little use for Isabella were cast off like old gloves and with them went their opinions. My friend actually quoted Chamisso and said that henceforth she would belong wholly to Ernest and live to serve and honor him. It was a dreadful come-down. However, Isabella had been so restless and tiresome as a militant woman and was so happy as an enslaved one that I, who am doubtless rather weak in my mind, rejoiced over her; and so did Aunt Susan. But she was as

surprised as I had 'been to hear that Mr. Schlösser was English.

Isabella brought him to see us one day and we liked him very well. He was a personable man and he certainly spoke English without a foreign accent. But the shape of his head was German and so was certain pedantry of mind and manner. He was what some people call well informed. He had the tabulated knowledge you find in an encyclopedia and imparted it with fluency on the smallest provocation. Unfortunately, Aunt Susan asked him at what age he had left Germany and this made him so angry that I felt quite uncomfortable. His face turned red and he replied that he had never been in Germany for an hour. He had been born in London and educated at Harrow and he was about to change his name to Saddington since people attached such an absurd value to names. He could not see himself why an Englishman called Schlösser should not be as English as one called Pelissier or Novissimo. He knew men of both names who were as English as any Smith or Brown.

Aunt Susan listened politely to this tirade and when he had gone sighed a little, perhaps with weariness.

"How do you like Mr. Schlösser?" I asked.

"Very well," said she, "but not so well as he likes the sound of his own voice."

I agreed with her. The young man was too voluble and instructive for my taste but luckily Isabella took a different view. She grew happier and happier as the time for her marriage approached and the delightful realities of a trousseau and a newly furnished house occupied her leisure. People like the Davids have large ideas about clothes and furniture on the

occasion of a daughter's wedding. At least Aunt Susan and I, with our frugal habits, thought so. Mr. David gave Isabella five hundred pounds for her trousseau and another five hundred to furnish her small flat. The whole German community to which she belonged showered presents on her of jewelry and household silver. But it was not only the London friends and relations who combined to do the future Mr. and Mrs. Saddington honor. From every town in Germany came gifts and wedding guests. Dresdens, Cohens, Schlössers, Mandelbaums! I could never remember all the names and the family reasons for asking them, but I heard a stout good natured Herr Mandelbaum address the bridegroom as his *lieber Ernst*.

"It was terrible," Isabella whispered to me. "When he arrived he made a rush at Ernest and kissed him before us all. He said his wife, who happens to be Ernest's aunt, charged him to do it. We shall be thankful when they are all safely back in Germany."

"I wonder why you asked them and why they came," I said, and Isabella explained that her father and mother had retrograde ideas and considered that a wedding ought to be a family reunion and the invitations as far flung as possible.

I was one of Isabella's bridesmaids. At first when I was asked Aunt Susan demurred because she thought that Isabella, like her sisters and brothers, would be married in a synagogue. But she did not know Mr. Saddington. (He was really changing his name and he had asked us all to get used to it at once and not wait for legal formalities.) He said that rather than be married in a synagogue he would not be married

at all. Why not a mosque or a Hindoo temple? He was a member of the Church of England (the highest brand), and his wife would worship where he did. There was an awful tow-row over this, Isabella told me. Her father especially did not like it, and was in two minds whether to let the marriage go on. But Mrs. David harked back to the affair with Herr Eichthal and the talk there had been in the community about it. She said they could not send Isabella to the other end of the world again in order to silence people's tongues, and how could it matter where she was married as long as she was well and happily married? The fuss men made of trifles! Ernest had a right to his opinions and probably good reasons for them. In India he had associated exclusively with Christians. He had told her that he meant to do the same thing in England. Everyone to his taste. She herself did not judge people by the size and shape of the noses God had given them, and though she lived contentedly in this country she was not ashamed of the one from which she came.

All these views and arguments presented a new corner of the world to me, a corner in which you were not English by blood but ardently desired to be, partly from genuine affection for everything English and partly from a discontent with the realities of your origin that no doubt was snobbish. I liked Mr. and Mrs. David better than I liked Mr. Saddington, for I could not see that it mattered where you came into the world so long as you bore yourself as creditably in it as Isabella's parents did. I thought the wedding would be a trying time for the bridegroom and no doubt there were painful moments, especially at the

reception after the ceremony when several elderly male relatives were determined to kiss him as well as the bride, and showed temper because he stood bolt upright and refused to be kissed. My sympathies were with him but Herr Plessen, a middle-aged man standing beside me, said that he found Mr. Saddington's manners cold and unnatural.

Herr Plessen had been introduced to me by Mrs. David as a Christian from Hamburg and I had been told beforehand that he was one of Ernest's senior partners and that I should please my friends if I paid a little attention to him. He was in London on business it seemed, and it was considered necessary or polite to ask him to the wedding although Ernest said that he was extremely anti-Semite and would feel like a fish out of water. He looked to me more like a giant amongst pigmies, for he was a head and shoulders taller than anyone else there; but I gathered from his detached manner and moments of solitude that he did feel himself in strange surroundings.

"In Hamburg," he said to me, "when there is a wedding there is a meal. I do not call this a meal."

I was eating an ice and *petit fours*, and we had both accepted a glass of champagne.

"*Heidsick Monopol*," he had said approvingly when he first tasted it.

"But no one wants a heavy meal at four o'clock in the afternoon," I argued.

"Why not? In Germany we are not the slaves of custom. If we are hungry at four we eat at four."

He spoke slowly and with deliberation. He had a kind quiet face, light blue eyes, a clean shaven heavy chin and scanty fair hair. His neck at the back of

his collar was as wide as his head and had creases of fat in it. He looked clean and his linen was white and shining. I noticed it because he wore evening clothes which looked odd in broad daylight, but he had explained to me that in Hamburg evening clothes were correct at a wedding and that no one had told him they would be incorrect in London. One or two of the other guests had made the same mistake and kept him in countenance, if that was necessary. But I don't think it was.

"I go back to Hamburg on Saturday," he said, and his eyes as they rested on me seemed to pass judgment, as if he was asking what Hamburg would think of me and answering the question more or less in my favor.

"You have not the appearance of a teacher," he said after a long ruminating survey.

I wondered what he meant, but I had been so much with the Davids and their friends that I had become used to having odd things said to me, odd personal comments and inquiries that we should only make in England if we were intimate.

"I am not a teacher," I said.

He looked at me again.

"Perhaps in more ordinary clothes . . ."

He did not finish his sentence but I knew what he meant. The Davids had rigged me out for the wedding because the bridesmaids' dresses were costly and fantastic. They knew I could not afford one, but they were pleased to say that the procession would be spoiled if I was not in it. They had an exaggerated idea of my looks just because I am not their own type. In an English crowd I should pass unnoticed.

There I should be a girl of average height, slim and well enough. But my wedding garment made something of me that I had never been before. I had seen that at home and so had Aunt Susan and Tibbie, our ancient cook. If there had not been seven others like it I would not have been seen in church arrayed so gorgeously. Isabella had said she would not have bridesmaids at all if they were to be pretty-pretty. No filmy white and blue ribbons at her wedding. She had different ideas. Where she got them from you may judge for yourself if you remember the vogue on the Paris stage just before the war.

"She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion spotted, golden, green and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barred;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lusters with the gloomier tapestries."

To translate into realities, Isabella or her dressmaker had found a silk gauze of many colors and a golden tissue that they embroidered with silver moons and made into an under dress of a fish-like tightness and with a fish-like tail. I wore golden shoes with it and a golden net on my hair, and when Aunt Susan saw me she said I looked like Lamia before she cast her skin. But Tibbie threw up her hands and said she could imagine Jezebel dressed so and she wondered Miss Darrell allowed it. I think from his expression that Herr Plessen agreed with Tibbie.

"Mrs. David tells me that your parents died when you were a child and that you have been educated by an aunt, a lady for whom she has the highest re-

spect," he said. "If it is agreeable to you I shall call upon her."

I thought that though he disapproved of my clothes he must have taken a liking to me, but that as he was going back to Hamburg on Saturday our friendship was bound to be nipped in the bud.

"We might write to each other sometimes," I said. "I should love to have a long letter in German that I had to puzzle out with a dictionary."

"Why should we write to each other?" said Herr Plessen, looking as if he thought me rather forward and presumptuous.

"Why should you want to call on my aunt?" I countered.

"Because I wish to make her an offer," he said seriously.

For a moment I thought he must be mad like the old man who made love to Mrs. Nickleby over the garden wall, but you only had to look at Herr Plessen to know that he was sane, sound, and well pleased with himself. He was a business man I knew; and no doubt the offer he wished to make my aunt would be business-like, but I had no inkling yet of what it was going to be.

III

"**M**RS. DAVID has a high opinion of you," continued Herr Plessen. "She says that you have been well brought up and that you set her daughter an excellent example which unfortunately she refused to follow."

This description was so unlike what I knew of myself and so like Mrs. David's ponderous way of praising anyone she wished to praise that I dare say I smiled.

"H . . . m," said Herr Plessen, "I wish I had brought my wife with me."

He paused a moment, sighed, and then continued speaking.

"My wife has a strong character. She knows exactly what she wants; still she has left it to me. In her letter this morning she says truly that a personal interview lasting five minutes is better than any amount of correspondence, and she concludes 'I do not care what she looks like as long as she does not remind me of Mamsell.'"

There was a movement in the room because one of the guests from Germany insisted on making a speech and people were crowding to his end of the room to listen to him. But Herr Plessen and I remained where we were.

"I suppose you know no German," he said.

"Very little."

"I consider that an advantage. The question is, do you know anything at all or are you as ignorant as we in Germany expect English people to be?"

"You cannot possibly imagine me more ignorant than I am," I said with a sigh.

"But you know your own language?"

I shook my head.

"Far from it," I assured him. "English is not an easy language to know."

"There you make a mistake," said Herr Plessen. "English is the easiest language in Europe. It is not declined. Its nouns are all neuter. Nothing is difficult in English except its unreasonable pronunciation."

I drank in his wisdom with a polite and I hope an interested expression, but instead of pursuing the subject I said directly he stopped:

"Who is Mamsell, and why does Mrs. Plessen not wish to be reminded of her?"

"Mamsell was the young person who lived in our house and assisted my wife with the children and the house-keeping. Unfortunately she was a conspicuous beauty and at the same time frivolous."

"What was she like?" I asked.

"I should think she must have weighed three times what you do," was his unexpected reply. "She was a big well-developed girl, with a high color and bright yellow hair. Not at all a personality that a careful mother wishes to send out with her children. But she was a perfect cook."

He sighed again and looked doubtfully at me.

"We should not expect you to cook," he said.

The whole conversation had been exciting and mysterious, for from the first I had known, of course, that it was not an ordinary one beginning nowhere and ending anyhow.

"Do you want an English Mamsell?" I cried. "Do you want me to come to Hamburg and teach your children English?"

"That is what I have been explaining ever since Mrs. David brought you up to me," he said with dignity. "I took for granted that you understood. Surely Mrs. David said something."

"She is very preoccupied to-day," I murmured, for Mrs. David had said nothing at all to me of Herr Plessen's plans. She was in a distraught state when we streamed into the drawing-room after the wedding because Mr. Saddington's Uncle Jacob and Isabella's Uncle Heinrich were having a heated controversy about the ceremonial and Uncle Jacob's attitude in church; and their argument was so loud and heated that everyone else had been reduced to silence and had gathered round them as if to form a ring. Mrs. David had managed to break it up by acting much like an intelligent sheep dog, herding some downstairs to look at the presents and others into another room where Isabella's trousseau was on view. In the midst of her anxieties she caught sight of me, seized me affectionately by the arm, led me up to Herr Plessen and said:

"This is the young lady, dear Herr Plessen. She is a favorite with everyone in my house. Even the servants are pleased when she pays us a visit."

I was not embarrassed because by this time I was used to Mrs. David's way of introducing people to

each other with a little hymn of praise or a short biographical description. Herr Plessen had looked at me in a ruminating way and without the least enthusiasm, and I had done my best to entertain him because I knew that he was a stranger and that the Davids wished him to be treated attentively.

"The moment I told Mrs. David what I was seeking she said that she could assist me," continued Herr Plessen and his tone was reproachful and disappointed. "She said that you had been at school with her daughter, but that you had been brought up in modest circumstances and had asked her to find you a situation, if possible out of England."

"Come and see Aunt Susan," I said. "If she will let me go . . ."

"Naturally I shall pay a visit to your aunt," he said. "You are too young to settle such an affair for yourself. Besides, before I can make up my own mind I must see you in other clothes and find out whether you can undertake the duties my wife would require of you."

"Can't you tell me about them now?" I said eagerly, and I took a step towards a window-seat some other people had vacated. But Herr Plessen did not follow. He remained stiffly standing where he was and accepted some more champagne which was now being carried round a second time. His manner made me feel that I had been rather forward in trying to take the initiative. His years, his sex and his possible position as my employer ought to have shown me that the initiative should be left to him. I wondered how he would get on with Aunt Susan and how I should prepare her for his visit.

"Will you come to tea on Thursday?" I said.

"I thank you," he said, and I thought that he meant that he would come. So I murmured something about half past four and he stared.

"Till half past five I am in the City," he said. "I shall call on your aunt punctually at six."

The room had become more crowded than ever now and I saw several people I knew. Some of them came up to me and I got separated from Herr Plessen. But as I bid good-by to Mrs. David after the departure of the bride and bridegroom she asked me if I had come to an arrangement with him. I shook my head.

"He will not commit himself till he has seen me in other clothes," I explained. "He is coming to call on us on Thursday."

"It would not be quite like an adventure amongst strangers," she said, looking at me in a friendly comfortable way. "You know that he is Ernest's partner and that they are people of some standing and position. The firm of Plessen and Wundt is known all over the world. Ernest is extremely lucky to have got it."

When I went back to Chelsea I found Aunt Susan in the drawing-room which occupied the first floor and had three straight narrow doll's house windows in front facing the square, and one wide one at the back facing streets and little gardens. I sat down near her and told her all I could about the wedding, but of course I could not make her see with my eyes and hear with my ears. When I got to the part about Herr Plessen I began to hesitate.

"When we got back from church Mrs. David introduced me to a Herr Plessen," I began.

"Introduced Herr Plessen to you," suggested Aunt Susan.

"No," I said, "it was the other way about. He was elderly and ponderous and he stood like a rock in the back drawing-room. He is Mr. Saddington's senior partner and lives in Hamburg."

Aunt Susan seemed to think she had heard enough about the David wedding and the David's friends. She was very polite but I, who knew her so well, knew when she was bored. I saw her eye stray to her open book and I saw that she was reading *Le Misanthrope* and probably wanted to get back to it.

"He is coming to call here on Thursday," I said, and startled her.

"I thought he was elderly," she murmured.

"He is, and married, and the father of a family."

"Then why is he coming?"

"He wants to make your acquaintance, and to see me in everyday clothes."

Aunt Susan did not try to get back to her book again. She looked at me.

"Isabella went to India," I said.

"So you want to go to Hamburg."

"I should only stay a year perhaps, and I should learn German. I really ought to earn my living, Aunt Susan. I'm a parasite."

"Nonsense!" She seemed to consider the matter some time and then said:

"But why Germany? India is nearer to us than Germany. You would feel more at home there."

I did not try to argue with her. I had broken the ice and that was the main thing. When Herr Plessen arrived on Thursday we were both in the drawing-

room ready for him, and I wore a plain dark blue linen that I had made myself. He looked very big as he came in, and my aunt looked small but self-possessed. She listened to what he had to say about the dust and the east wind, both of which had incommoded him; and when she saw an opening she asked him how many children he had and what ages they were. He told her that he had two boys and two girls and that the boys went to school. While he talked he was looking hard at the room and at us, and the more he looked the more urbane he became. Before long he took out an enormous pocket handkerchief of a dazzling whiteness and blew a regular trumpet call on his nose with it. When he had shattered our nerves and soothed himself in this way, he said:

"We will now come to business. I require an English governess for my children, and Mrs. David recommends your niece. I do not offer her much salary because she will live with us and be one of the family. Mrs. David informs me that her daughter received nothing but her traveling expenses."

"The Davids are wealthy people," said my aunt.

"Your niece is quite without experience or training," said Herr Plessen. "She confessed to me that she did not even know her own language."

"Fiddlededee," said my aunt, "the laborer is worth his hire."

Herr Plessen looked as if he did not understand what she was saying and turned to me.

"Twenty pounds," he said; "four hundred marks, paid monthly. It is liberal. I could get fifty young ladies who do not know their own language for noth-

ing but their keep and their fare. But my time is short and I have seen you twice. That is not much, but it is something. You must make up your mind at once because I must 'phone for a berth. I am returning by sea on Saturday."

"On Saturday!" I cried. "You want me to be ready on Saturday?"

"Why not?" said Herr Plessen.

IV

ON Saturday I met Herr Plessen at Waterloo, traveled with him to Southampton and found myself on board the *Amerika*, a German ship, owned and manned by Germans and in the main used by them. Aunt Susan had not wished me to come. I saw that. But she had not prevented it. She had always reminded me of the mother in Miss Edgeworth's story who let Rosamund buy the purple jar and find out for herself that it was not worth the money. When I consulted her, she said that it was unnecessary for me to leave home and that the position of governess was not always a pleasant one. I thought she got her ideas from the Brontë novels, and that now-a-days people had wide views about women who wished to be self-supporting. I pointed out to her that if I did go I could come back again if I was unhappy, and she said that had occurred to her, too, and that I must please myself. So I sent a wire to Herr Plessen accepting his offer and a little note of thanks to Mrs. David telling her what I was about to do. The dear woman arrived next day with a fur coat that she said I should need in the winter because it was much colder in Hamburg than in London, and a small Thermos flask which she said Isabella would not miss as fifteen had been sent to Ernest and to

her for wedding presents. She was delighted to hear that I was going to the Plessens and she certainly cheered up Aunt Susan. She said that during the summer I should be a great deal on the water and probably learn to sail a pleasure boat, and that in winter there was skating by day and the opera or a concert at night; and that Hamburgers like the Plessens kept such a good table that they were difficult to please elsewhere. She assured my aunt that my going as Isabella's friend would make all the difference in the world to my position there and I know she believed this. She was so kind and generous herself that she easily expected to find her own qualities in other people. But she said that she had never seen Frau Plessen and had never heard a word about her.

When she had gone we looked up Hamburg in the Encyclopedia and as I was busy with my clothes and my packing Aunt Susan said she would copy out some of the important dates and events in the history of the town for me. During dinner she told me a little about the Hanseatic League and advised me to go to Lübeck if I could and buy some of the celebrated marzipan made there. Of course she pronounced the "z" in the English way and not like the "ts" as she should have done. She knew French very well and some Italian, but no German; and her ideas about Germany were chiefly derived from Grimm's Fairy Tales, and an old-fashioned sentimental story called "German Love." She did read the papers, but she did not believe in a German Peril because, she argued, an inland country would not go to war with a great maritime power. She said that journalists had to make a living and that they made it by scaring

fools. She refused to be scared and the few Germans she had met in life were decent, peaceable folk like the Davids. In those days I didn't think about such things and I willingly agreed with Aunt Susan. My ideas of Germany were colored by "Elizabeth's" enchanting books and one of the first questions I asked Herr Plessen as we traveled to Southampton was whether he had ever been to Ruegen.

"Last year we spent the summer freshness at Putbus," he replied. So I asked him if he had read "Elizabeth in Ruegen," and he said that he had not, and that this year they were going to Schöndorf in the Frankische Schweiz because their doctor considered sea air injurious to the children.

It seemed an odd idea but I thought it would not be polite to say so. I murmured something about sea air making some people bilious and that seemed to annoy him. He said that people were not bilious unless they were greedy and that what his family suffered from was weak nerves. Then he seemed to want to read the paper and we traveled in silence for some time. When we got on the Amerika he helped me to find my berth which he had taken on the second-class part of the ship, and I did not see him again till we arrived at Cuxhafen next day. He went first class himself and told his wife in my hearing that he had a room furnished with satinwood and pale blue satin and that though he was a bad sailor he had been able to enjoy most of his meals. So did I, and even the second-class ones were plentiful and beautifully cooked. I was sorry when night came as it seemed such waste of time to go to sleep in a foreign ship where everything was interesting. In the

darkness there was a fog and a halt, much clanging of bells and the sound of German spoken in my drowsy ears. We had been near running down a small ship, the stewardess told me in the morning, and she pointed out that in the moment of danger it steadies the nerves to know that you are more likely to harm others than to be harmed yourself.

I cannot tell you anything about Cuxhafen because we were escorted straight into a special train waiting for us and we were taken without a stop to Hamburg. Then we drove through crowded streets and market places, some of which I could see were very old and frequented by the poorer part of the population. The women and children in these parts of the city were mostly bareheaded and dressed in serviceable stuffs plainly made. They looked much tidier than our working classes do and even from the taxi I could see that they wore home-knitted stockings and strong boots. Most of them were fair-haired and the boys had their heads closely cropped, but many of the girls wore theirs in two thick pigtails. I did not see many soldiers in the streets but I noticed that all the postmen and tram servants wore uniforms and wore them with neatness and precision. When we had driven a long way we came to the water that Mrs. David had spoken of when she said that I should probably learn to sail a pleasure boat; and I had tried to picture an ancient city built round a lake, its gabled roofs and storied casements leaning towards deep gloomy waters, green and sunless by day, starlit at night. Well! Hamburg is a handsome, cheerful town with old romantic bits hidden away in back streets and in some weathers and at some hours pos-

sessing beauty. But on this brilliant summer morning I did not find the city of my dreams, though I found another one as unlike my dreams as Herr Plessen, for instance, was unlike one of Grimm's younger sons or the hero of "German Love."

The water sparkled in the sunlight, little boats with white sails danced on its surface, steamboats laden with passengers passed by us and on three sides of its hard unyielding concrete walls, damming it safely from the city there rose tall, white, modern houses, glistening with newness and talking of money. At one of these our taxi stopped and leaving me to get out by myself, Herr Plessen entered and preceded me upstairs. I was not surprised by his manners, but I did not exactly enjoy them. However, like Touchstone, I told myself that travelers must be content and that I had not left home in order to find everyone and every thing what I was used to. He stopped on the first floor, let himself in with his own key, went straight through a small entrance hall, leaving me standing there, and in a sonorous voice called out:

"Otilie!"

Almost at once the door of a room opened and a lady appeared whose glance went straight to me although a great deal of her was being enfolded in Herr Plessen's embrace and in a business-like way affectionately greeted. I thought her response seemed chilly and that she showed relief when he let her go again, and waving his hand towards me, said:

"I bring you the English Fraülein."

"If the young lady is English she is not a Fraülein," said Frau Plessen, and addressing me she said: "If you please, come in."

It was lighter in the room we now entered than it had been in the passage and from its three large windows I saw the life and ripple of the water again and the warm sunshine of the June day. But though I could see it all my attention was fixed for the moment on the mistress of the house. She had a good head of fair hair elaborately and carefully done in a Pompadour style that would have looked old-fashioned in London, but which suited her. She wore a blue foulard with white spots, well made, but fussy. She had some magnificent rings on her fingers and she sat on the sofa beside her husband with an air of frosty dignity that was not in the least like my conception of the German *Haus Frau*. There was no table in front of the sofa but there was one in revolving tiers on her right hand and it had books and magazines on it. The room was not large but it was pleasantly furnished with English looking cretonnes, comfortable looking chairs and a Persian carpet covering the whole floor.

"What is your name?" Frau Plessen said to me, and I told her that it was Sarah Danvers. She gave a little start, glanced swiftly at her husband, looked at me from head to foot and said:

"Why Sarah?" She pronounced it more like Sarrah and in her guttural voice it sounded ugly.

"It was my mother's name," I said.

"Was your mother a Jewess?"

I said no, and I spoke without emphasis and in a low tone as we English do when we are taken aback.

"I am extremely anti-Semitic," she said, and bridled. At least she seemed to throw up her head and draw in her chin, and when people did that Aunt

Susan used to say they bridled and that it was a gesture she particularly disliked.

I waited in silence and hoped she would change the subject because it was not one in which I had any interest or could speak with feeling. I had read about Jews in the Bible and in *Ivanhoe* and I knew the Davids and liked them, but I was neither the partisan nor the enemy of the race.

"You do not look Jewish," Frau Plessen continued, "but why Sarah? Can you assure me that you are of Christian descent?"

"How far back do you want to go?" I asked. "Because a friend of my aunt's wrote a pamphlet to prove that the English were the descendants of the lost tribes. You see if he proved his case . . ."

"*Papperlapap*," said Herr Plessen unexpectedly, "I am hungry, wife. What time shall we eat?"

Frau Plessen's eyes were well shaped and a good gray, but like her manner hard and chilly. She had a large mouth, excellent teeth, what Germans call a potato nose and a poor complexion. She told her husband that dinner would be served in half an hour and that there was just time for him to have the hot bath he always desired after a journey. She then rose and signaled to me to follow her, and as we walked along the narrow corridor of the flat she asked me what experience I had had in teaching and the care of children.

V

BEFORE I could answer, Frau Plessen opened the door of a large bedroom in which I saw three wooden bedsteads, three chests of drawers, three washstands, three chairs, an antique dark wooden hanging cupboard and a well polished painted floor. There was only one mirror, framed in tarnished gilt and placed in a bad light behind one of the washstands. Still the room looked spacious, clean and comfortable, and it would have been cheerful if the paint had not been a muddy brown and the walls as well as the ceiling papered with bilious brownish greens.

"How nice!" I said. "It looks as if it was ready for the three bears."

"It is ready for you and my two daughters," said Frau Plessen frostily. "In your last situation . . ."

"This is my first situation," I said hurriedly. "I have never been from home before. Herr Plessen knows that. He came to see my aunt."

"It is possible to live at home and yet to have some experience in teaching and the care of children," Frau Plessen pointed out, and then sat down on one of the three chairs. She did not ask me to sit down, but I did so.

"How old are you?" she said.

"I was twenty last October," I said.

"It is too young. I told my husband I wanted a young person of discretion. Why were you with your aunt? What has happened to your parents?"

"They died when I was a child."

"Has your aunt a family of her own?"

"No, she is unmarried."

"The aunt then has brought you up. You have lived with her till now?"

"Yes."

"But you have not been trained as a teacher?"

"No."

"In that case you cannot teach. What can you do?"

It was an embarrassing question for I began to think that from Frau Plessen's point of view I could do nothing.

"I thought you wanted me to talk English to the children and to look after them," I said.

Frau Plessen hardly answered and I got the impression that I was not in the least what she expected or desired. In fact, I wondered whether it was worth while unpacking my trunk and if after consulting or reproaching her husband she would request me to depart by the next steamer. However, she said nothing more at the moment because two little girls dashed into the room and stopped petrified on the threshold when they saw their mother and a stranger. I got up and went towards them. They were attractive looking children with friendly blue eyes, a fresh color and fair hair plaited in thick pigtails; and when I shook hands with them they made me a little bob and said "How do you do" in English. Then each

of them shook hands with their mother and made a bob to her.

"This is your new governess, Miss Danvers," said Frau Plessen, and reminding me that dinner would be ready in ten minutes, she left us to ourselves.

"What are your names?" I said by way of a beginning.

"I am Olga," said the elder one.

"I am Trudi," said the other, and then they looked at each other and giggled as children do when they feel shy.

I felt shy myself, for except at school I had not been used to children, and I wondered whether I ought to help them get ready for dinner. I thought they stared rather hard when I went to the washstand appointed to me and poured out some water, so I asked them if they did not mean to wash their hands. They had taken off their hats and without the help of a mirror had just touched their hair with a brush.

"It is not allowed to wash in here during the day," said Olga, and put away her brush in a drawer.

It was not for me to make rules in the house or if I could help it to break them so I said nothing, but tidied my own hair and then intimated that I was ready to go into dinner. But Trudi pointed a warning finger to my hat and traveling coat which I had left upon my bed.

"It is not allowed to leave one's clothes upon the bed," she said.

"Trudi!"

The elder child's tone was one of reproof, but Trudi paid no attention. On the contrary, she continued to train me in the way I should go. I had left my

hand-bag askew on the chest of drawers with the brush and comb I had taken out beside it. She put back the brush and comb, shut the bag and removed it to a chair.

"It is not allowed to have anything upon the chest of drawers," she said. "It makes more trouble for Marie when she dusts."

"But now that Miss Danvers has come Marie will not dust. Miss Danvers will dust," argued Olga.

The two little girls were standing close together now and staring at me with the unabashed curiosity of their years.

"Miss Danvers has not the appearance of one who dusts," said Trudi, and she whispered something in German to her sister who nodded doubtfully. Then they both began to giggle again.

"It is not allowed to giggle in the presence of your elders," I said mimicking Trudi's solemn tone when she chid me.

"Giggle!" one of them cried. "What is giggle?"

But they pronounced it more like kikkle, and while I was trying to make them say the word as I did and they could hardly speak at all for laughing, a gong was sounded and both children ran ahead of me into the corridor.

I followed them into the dining-room where we found Herr and Frau Plessen and the two boys who were presented to me as Oscar and Arthur. Each boy put his heels together, made me a deep bow and shook hands. I felt inclined to make them a deep curtsy in return but refrained while their mother's frosty eye was upon us. I wondered why we did not sit down to table at once for the soup was there and

Herr Plessen was impatiently walking up and down the room just as the lions and tigers at the Zoo do in their cages at feeding time. But on looking more closely at the table I saw that it was laid for eight and just as Herr Plessen had come to a standstill and told us to take our places, a young man entered the room and going up to him affectionately kissed him on both cheeks and welcomed him home again.

"My nephew, Herr Heiling," said Frau Plessen to me, and when the young man had made his bow but had not shaken hands, we sat down to dinner.

I shall always remember that first meal in a foreign city although it was in no way elaborate or remarkable. First we had an excellent soup with the narrow home-made macaroni in it that Americans call noodles. Then the longest dish with the longest piece of beef I had ever seen arrived, and rising to his feet to get at it better Herr Plessen plunged his fork into one end and cut the whole into slices. When he had finished he passed the dish to his wife who sat next to him while the maid who waited on us handed round mountains of asparagus and little new potatoes just browned in butter. I sat between Olga and Trudi, and by the time the long dish came to me I had noticed that Frau Plessen and Herr Heiling both cut their meat into small pieces before they began to eat it and that as they did so they grasped the fork firmly in the hollow of the hand and held it fixed and upright in the meat. I imitated them. I didn't find it as easy as it looked, but when I was a child Aunt Susan had told me the story of the prince who drank his tea out of the saucer because his hostess who knew no better did so. I had even heard her pronounce

a word incorrectly rather than mortify an interlocutor whose education was not her affair. So I thought that as I was in Hamburg I would do as the Hamburgers did even if it was difficult, and I was glad to observe that in this household no one attempted those conjuring tricks with knives that I had seen done at the Davids' by raw recruits from the Fatherland. Herr Plessen had tucked a corner of his large fine dinner napkin into his collar and the two boys did likewise, but Frau Plessen and the rest of us ate without protection. The children did not eat well. They lapped their soup up noisily, scraped their meat plate with their knives and drank with artless gasps and gurgles of satisfaction. I did not think it would be seemly for me to reprove them in the presence of their parents especially as I had the impression that the parents disapproved of me. You know how eloquently this may be conveyed without the use of words. When I was cutting up my meat I raised my eyes and saw that they were both watching me and I knew I must be doing it badly because they exchanged glances that, though they were not addressed to me, were withering. "Be calm in the moment of danger," I said to myself and tugged at a vindictive end of gristle that would not be separated from the meat in a well behaved way but suddenly flung itself off the plate and on the spotless cloth. A catastrophe of magnitude and me the offender! I turned scarlet, the boys began to giggle, Frau Plessen looked at me severely, her husband gloomed and Trudi said in her shrill clear voice:

"When we soil things on the cloth mother calls us little pigs."

"I'm so sorry," I said, and looking up again I met Herr Heiling's eyes fixed on me with amusement. At first he had had no eyes for me at all and I had thought his manner when he was presented decidedly cavalier. He was a good-looking young man, having a clean shaven face, hazel eyes and pleasant features. His manner was one of complete assurance, his voice was high and nasal, he evidently went to an expensive but a German tailor, and I guessed that in Hamburg he was a person of fashion. He seemed to be on excellent terms with his young cousins and I counted that in his favor. But somehow he had done more than any of the others to make me feel that my position in this household was betwixt and between.

"I have been often in England," said Herr Plessen magisterially, "but I never saw anyone there hold his fork as you held yours just now."

"I never did it before," I said, "when I get more used to it . . ."

"We do not wish you to get used to it," said Frau Plessen. "We only do it ourselves at the *Familientisch*. In society we should not dream of it. I was appalled when I saw you were eating in such a way. We expect you to have English table manners and to teach them with thoroughness to the children."

"You know now, *Kinder*," said Herr Heiling. "You keep your eyes on Miss Danvers and imitate everything she does. So!" He stared hard at me and when I lifted my glass of water to my lips he lifted his glass of Pilsener beer and drank.

"So!" cried all the children in chorus and lifted their glasses too; but Olga, seeing an enormous dish of strawberries arrive flourished her glass in welcome

of them and splashed most of the water in it on my plate and the cloth. If I had not pushed my chair back swiftly I should have received more than I did in my face.

"*Na!*" said Frau Plessen, "if this is English behavior at meals I want no more of it. Look at the state of the cloth between Olga and Miss Danvers."

VI

THE Plessens were evidently wealthy people and they lived in an expensive flat in the best part of Hamburg, but the flat was not large enough to allow the children and me a sitting-room to ourselves. At any rate we did not have one. In the morning I was expected, as Trudi had foreseen, to tidy our bedroom and then to sit there and sew; and in the afternoons I was either out of doors with the children or teaching them English in the dining-room. I generally sat by myself in the dining-room after my pupils went to bed and I found that the dreariest part of the twenty-four hours.

I did not tell Aunt Susan that I had to do a bedroom for three people and sit there half the day making and mending clothes. When Frau Plessen told me that these duties would devolve on me I expressed the surprise I felt and said that I was not qualified as a housemaid or a sewing maid. But she observed that I was not a qualified teacher either and that I should probably turn out not worth my salt. It was a question which of us gave way and I only had to look at Frau Plessen to know that it would not be her. When I had looked at her I looked out of the window at the Alster, as I had done when I first arrived, and the longer I looked the more delectable seemed the city of Hamburg and the amenities of

life there, even for a penniless young woman being bested by her employer. After all, what did it matter? Besides there was something to be said for Frau Plessen's point of view. Her husband had brought me from England in order to fill a gap in the household staff and by my own showing I was not competent to fill it. I had never done any housework, I had never done any dress-making, I was not a musician or a linguist. It was depressing to find out how small my market value was and by the time I had discussed the situation with Frau Plessen for half an hour I understood that she was magnanimous to keep me at all in return for the unskilled services I could render. I was made to see this so clearly that I did not like to say anything about the salary Herr Plessen had promised me; the small salary at which Aunt Susan had sniffed. I supposed it would be paid when the time came. During the war between Russia and Japan I had been told about a great Japanese general who in his youth had served as a waiter in an English hotel because he wanted to see England and had to maintain himself there. The thought of him heartened me tremendously and I hoped it was a true story and that he had found his early experiences were worth while. At first the disadvantages of my position did not weigh as much as a feather compared with the joy of waking every morning in Hamburg instead of in Chelsea. I made up my mind that I would stay as long as I was happy and go home when I became unhappy, and this seemed such an easy sensible way of facing the future that I took every day as it came and usually got through it pretty well.

I did not find Frau Plessen a pleasant person to deal with. She was not actively unkind and she was an efficient housekeeper who provided everyone with good food and good beds. But her ideas of caste were hide bound and excluded me from any intercourse that was not strictly business-like. She kept me hard at work while the children were at school, never took them off my hands when they came home and yet was never satisfied. Apparently, my predecessor, the Mamsell, had done a great many things in the house that I did not do and comparisons were drawn between us to my disadvantage. One morning when I had taken Olga and Trudi to school I was told on my return that it was a day of unusual stress in the kitchen and that I must lend a hand there. A large quantity of gooseberries for bottling had arrived and it was necessary to prepare them at once. So I put on a long muslin apron, went into the kitchen and sat down to top and tail gooseberries. I did not mind in the least because it gave me a chance of looking at the kitchen and seeing a German cook at work. But I was surprised that Frau Plessen did not help us. I had always heard that the German housewife worked with her own hands and I knew that Mrs. David often had differences with her English maids because she was "about the kitchen" too much to please them. Frau Plessen came in and out a good deal but it was to give orders, superintend operations and find fault. I had not heard servants scolded as she scolded hers but they seemed to take it in the day's work, only murmuring when she went away that she was *böse* this morning. Two were kept and I never saw one of them idle for a moment.

I thought they had a hard life and I liked them both and felt sorry for them. Nothing seemed to be done for their ease and not much for their well being. There was not a comfortable chair in the kitchen or for that matter in my bedroom either. They hardly ever went out, they rose at cock-crow, they toiled late and they were always anxious to please, and smiling. When I could I practiced my imperfect German on them and they took everything I said as a joke and often with peals of friendly laughter. This morning my pronunciation of the German word for gooseberries which is *Stachelbeeren* tickled them to tears and when they had recovered from that they wanted to know whether we had gooseberries in England and what we did with them. I tried to explain the process of making gooseberry fool but I did not know the German word for a sieve and I felt sure that one was required. I got up for a moment to find one and as I did so the front door bell rang. Marie went to answer it and Sophie took a large flat tin out of the oven covered with gooseberry tartlets. One was considerably larger than the rest and she cut this into three pieces and offered me one piece smoking hot. I thought I should burn my fingers and hesitated.

"*Immer zu,*" she said encouragingly. "She is out. I heard the door slam."

To what had I descended? And did the Japanese general have surreptitious dainties thrust upon him behind a kitchen door, and when he was hungry? It was midday now and I was always as hungry as a wolf by midday because we had breakfast early; the light delicious continental breakfast of coffee and fresh rolls. I had been told that many Hamburg

people had lunch at twelve, dinner at four or five and a supper of kickshaws with beer at nine or ten. But the Plessens dined at one with the children and me, and had afternoon tea at five and another meal by themselves at seven. While they were having this evening meal I was busy putting the children to bed so that by the time I got back to the dining-room it was empty and the table cleared. Marie brought me something to eat on a tray then; usually thick slices of gray bread, thin slices of sausage and a small slender bottle of Pilsener beer, presumably the supper they had in the kitchen themselves. I used to eat the bread and sausage and leave the beer, but I had not asked for anything else to drink instead of it. I suppose I did not hold my own with Frau Plessen as much as I should have done but I regarded the whole experience as an adventure and was determined to take the rough with the smooth until the rough troubled me more than the smooth amused me.

It was in this mood that I stood in the kitchen eating hot gooseberry tart when the door opened and Herr Heiling appeared followed by Sophie. I was so astonished that I stared at him, and probably showed some confusion and annoyance, for he smiled in the way people smile when they catch someone else doing that which should not be done, and there is no doubt that I was not supposed to be standing idly in Frau Plessen's kitchen eating hot pastry shortly before dinner when my share of the pastry would be handed to me in a decorous manner on a dish.

"*Schönes Fräulein!*" he began and I, taken aback by his tone, probably showed the surprise I felt. At any rate he changed it, as I, having relinquished most

of my gooseberry tart, preceded him into the dining-room.

"I have a message for my aunt," he said. "I thought I had better give it to you and not to Marie."

I waited for the message.

"You have not opened your lips yet even to say good-morning," he complained.

His manner startled me again. When he arrived in the kitchen it had been merry and assured, rather more assured than I could stand, and now it was still assured but it was no longer merry. He seemed to be seeking something from me that I had not given and his voice for the first time since we had met had a personal note in it that was both provocative and friendly.

"If you will give me the message I will deliver it," I said.

"I am not coming to dinner to-day," he announced.

"What else?"

"Nothing else."

It was absurd and he knew it. As a rule he dined with us every day. His house was on the outer Alster and his place of business close by, so the arrangement suited him. But he often accepted other invitations or entertained friends at a restaurant or a hotel. I got the impression from the Plessens that he was one of the young bloods of Hamburg, the son of rich people and for his own sake greatly in request. I liked him myself although I thought him spoiled and rather conceited. But his good spirits were infectious and his looks grew upon one. The Plessens talked of him as if he was the Apollo Belvidere but that was nonsense. He was a personable young man as

I have said already but not in any way remarkable. I had hardly noticed his eyes until they sought mine this morning with more insistence and attention than I was ready to reciprocate. Then I saw that they were beguiling and that they could be eloquent.

"Why are we standing?" he said. "Come and sit down near the window and tell me how you like Hamburg and what you have seen."

He moved towards the window as if he felt sure that I should follow him but I did not do so.

"I will give your message but I cannot stay here," I said. "I am busy in the kitchen."

"What are you doing there? My aunt has told me more than once that you cannot cook. She says your ignorance is hair-raising and that she discovered the other day that you had never seen a nutmeg."

"Have you ever seen a nutmeg?"

"Never, but then I shall never have to keep house."

"After all," I pointed out, "when the time comes for me to run a house I shall be able to do it in the English way. I am not going to spend my life in Germany."

"How do you know? A woman never knows where she will spend her life. Suppose a German fell in love with you?"

VII

HE made me angry. "Suppose a German fell in love with me!" Suppose he did and suppose I did not fall in love with the German? I was just going to answer in this way when Frau Plessen surprised us together, and on thinking it over calmly I was glad that she did because such a riposte would have been undignified and juvenile. But Frau Plessen was not pleased to find me in the dining-room talking to her nephew.

"Miss Danvers! You here! Are the gooseberries finished then?"

I did not answer. I left it to Herr Heiling to give his own explanation and went out of the room. It was time to fetch the little girls from school and as I put on my hat in front of the glass I was amazed at my own appearance. I actually looked angry. My color had risen and my eyes had lights in them that I had hardly ever seen there.

I wished I had had a wider experience of young men and their ways, and knew better how to deal with this one. He must learn that I was not a chamber-maid to be chucked under the chin when no one was there that mattered. Perhaps he had learned that already for his manner in the dining-room had been quite unlike his manner in the kitchen when he had called me *schönes Fraülein*. Did he think that I was

going to answer as Gretchen did that I was "*weder Fraülein, weder schön?*"

I was not as well born as the Japanese general who acted as a waiter but I had some pride of caste. The more fool me I dare say, since I had no money to support it and was in a foreign land performing such menial tasks as the topping and tailing of gooseberries for a woman with diamond rings and a bad tempered mouth. What misleading nonsense Mrs. David had talked about my being one of the family. I was nothing of the kind, nor was I one of the kitchen. While I put on my hat I felt lonely, homesick and indignant, but directly I got out of doors I was glad I had left home. For whatever happened I should have this to carry with me as long as I lived: this picture of a German city on a summer day. The flashing water, the little sail boats, the steamers, the broad pavements on either side of the road, cars, carts, carriages thronging the Jungfernstieg at this hour of the morning, men of affairs hurrying home to lunch or dinner, expensive-looking shops with four or five floors of flats above them, hotels, little boys mostly wearing spectacles, and carrying satchels on their way home from school, girls, too, in groups chattering German as I passed them, hot sunshine, a cloudless sky and, when I came to a market place, some remains of the morning's fruit and vegetables, and *Vierwalderinnen* in their broad hats and bright full skirts still chaffering at the stalls. I made up my mind that morning that I would go on as I had begun. I was poor but I would see the world. I would not live like a weevil in a biscuit. When I was tired of Germany I would go to Paris and then to Italy. In

between I would run back to London and visit Aunt Susan because she was getting old and I loved her. Perhaps I ought to stay with her instead of traveling! Another phrase of Stevenson's came into my mind as I turned into the quiet street where Olga and Trudi went to school, a phrase about duty and inclination coming nobly to the grapple. Perhaps the best was not to look ahead. Life must hold leaves I had not turned yet. I thought of myself as leading it singly, I suppose, because I had lived mostly with a single woman. But people did fall in love and marry. In novels and plays they did even when they were poor, but not often in real life unless they belonged to the working classes. At any rate I was nearly twenty-one and had never had an offer of marriage or even a flirtation. Aunt Susan and I did not know any young men and though the little Hungarian had made dog's eyes at me he had not asked me to marry him.

I never have thought much of my looks and I have always envied the women who see in the mirror a tall commanding presence, violet eyes, cherry lips, golden hair and a color like a brier rose. It sounds horrid in a catalogue, as horrid as the page of an illustrated paper showing stage ladies in tights and with smiles and teeth. Still you can imagine the type of beauty I aspire to be and will know how far I come short of it when I tell you that my hair is light brown . . . just light brown . . . my eyes any color . . . green or gray according to my mood or the weather . . . and my other features indifferent good but unremarkable and rather small. I am neither tall nor short . . . I am thin . . . thin enough for England . . . too thin for Germany . . . I walk

well . . . my dancing mistress said I did . . . and I know how to choose my clothes. Mrs. David always told me that because Isabella's clothes were a great trial to her mother when she began to have an allowance and buy her own. She had no imagination and bought things that look well on other people but did not suit her. Frau Plessen did much the same. She was not in the least like Isabella. She fancied herself more than any woman I have ever seen and she evidently spent a great deal on her clothes. Sometimes they were handsome and becoming but sometimes they were grotesque. They were worst of all when they were supposed to be "sporting" and presumably English. She was a very German-looking woman with broad hips, a wide thick mouth, freckled skin and awkward gait; so when she appeared in a coat and skirt of large brown and white checks, yellow tan boots and a small hat with cock's feathers, the rigout doubtless cost what she said it did but you wondered how she could be fool enough to wear it.

When I got to the *Kindergarten* I had to wait a few minutes for the children, an interlude I was beginning to dislike because it gave a certain Miss Campbell a chance of accosting me. Miss Campbell had seen that I was English directly we met, she had hailed me as her compatriot and by degrees she had told me a great deal about her private affairs. These showed her to be a person of such unusual ability and importance that I wondered why she should be waiting with me and others less fortunate than me, for a child to take home from school. She was not a type I had come across before and I thought it would take Mrs. David with her wide knowledge of na-

tionalities to place her. She spoke fluent English with the most hideous accent I had ever heard: German and Whitechapel so combined that the resulting twang made you shudder. She was dark, bilious looking and plain, but she did not seem to know any of these unfortunate facts about herself for though her arrogance was of a different quality from Frau Plessen's it seemed to be equally sustaining. She told me that she was English but that she had lived a great deal in Paris with a married sister called Wolf and that her brother-in-law, Monsieur Wolf, was one of the most influential and highly placed men in France. It was only her spirit of independence that led her to forsake the gay and brilliant social conditions she was accustomed to for a post that offered her unparalleled emoluments and opportunities. I am sorry to use such long words but it is impossible to think of Miss Campbell in short ones. She told me that she was superintending the education of an only child called Gisela Crefeld and that Gisela's parents were the wealthiest and most considered people in Hamburg. She asked me where I was staying and when I mentioned the Plessens she said she did not know them. I gathered that this was derogatory to the Plessens, but when I asked Frau Plessen if she had ever heard of the Crefelds she said that they were Jews and that she was not on visiting terms with them. Her tone in saying this consigned the Crefelds to limbo and Miss Campbell with them. This made it difficult for me to judge between the houses but I remembered what Aunt Susan told me about the Darrells looking down on the Danvers because they were dissenters and in trade, and the Danvers looking down on the

Darrells because they were proud and poor. I believe that humanity has a good deal in common even when it is as far apart as the Elbe and the Aire, though I had never met anyone in my own country quite as disagreeable and at the same time as assiduous in her attentions as Miss Campbell. She came up to me the moment I entered the room, shook hands and asked me what arrangements I had made with Frau Plessen about going out. I said I had made none at all.

"But you must see to it at once," she said. "You must insist on having time to yourself when you can accept invitations and meet your friends."

She reminded me of the boarder in Rudder Grange. What she proposed was right and reasonable but because she proposed it I did not want to do it.

"I have not a friend in Hamburg and I am sure that I shall have no invitations," I said.

"I bring you one from Frau Crefeld," she answered. "She will be pleased to see you next Sunday. She lived in London till she married and she knows your friends, the Davids. If you can come I will call for you early in the afternoon."

"It is very kind," I said, not greatly tempted.

"Then I will tell Frau Crefeld that you will come. Shall I call for you at three?"

"I must ask Frau Plessen first."

"Not at all. You must tell the good lady that you reserve Sunday afternoon and evening for yourself. One must stand on one's rights. *'Hammer oder Ambos sein.'*"

Olga and Trudi came running towards me before I could pull myself together and say in a polite way that I could manage my own affairs. I had not even

made up my mind to accept Miss Campbell's invitation for though some aspects of it were exhilarating I did not take to her.

"Miss Campbell was at the *Kindergarten* to-day," I said to Frau Plessen when we were at dinner. Her manner was rather unusually standoffish and when the children said something about the swimming-bath they were told that I could not take them because I should be busy all the afternoon with gooseberries. I began to wonder whether I was being put upon and whether I ought to say that I had come there as governess and not as cook. But in England the idea prevails that in Germany all women from high to low are eternally engaged in domestic occupations and I thought that if I objected to gooseberries I should be told that the Empress invariably prepared them with her own hands for the Emperor.

"Who is Miss Campbell?" said Frau Plessen, and she spoke as if the effort of remembering the name of a governess in a Jewish family could not be expected of her.

"She is Gisela Crefeld's governess," said Olga. "I like her not."

"*Pfui!*" said Trudi, and spat out a cherry stone, but she blinked at me and smiled, agreeably conscious that what she said and did were both naughty.

"Frau Crefeld has invited me to go there next Sunday," I continued. "If it is convenient . . ."

"Is it your wish that Trudi spits out her cherry-stones?" interrupted Oscar.

"It is better to spit than to swallow," argued Trudi. "Papa says so."

Papa looked up from his *Hamburger Nachrichten*,

which he always read toward the end of dinner, and said that England had been getting in the way of Germany as usual and that she would some day find German patience exhausted.

"Miss Danvers is invited to the Crefelds next Sunday," said Frau Plessen in a tone that I could only half interpret. She did not seem pleased, but I thought she seemed impressed.

"They perhaps know your friends the Davids," said Herr Plessen. "Frau Crefeld is English."

VIII

I WROTE to Miss Campbell and accepted Frau Crefeld's invitation. I could not resist the chance of spending a few hours in fresh surroundings and of meeting Frau Crefeld, who was English. I did not consider myself homesick. I still thought it a heavenly adventure to be in a foreign land and I recognized that, for a girl without a penny, I was not badly placed. The children and servants were friendly, Herr Plessen was indifferent and Frau Plessen gave me plenty to eat. She issued orders in an arrogant tone to everyone except her husband, and I had heard her haul him over the coals when he forgot an engagement or a commission. The children went in fear and trembling of their mother and I had no trouble with them because they had been trained from infancy to do as they were bid. The boys I hardly saw except at meals and for an hour every afternoon when I gave them a conversation lesson. I did not teach them English grammar or composition because Frau Plessen said they would learn these rudiments of the language more thoroughly at school. I asked her if she would like them to read a Shakespeare play with me and she said certainly not, because no one would read Shakespeare in English who could understand him in German and that when I knew German enough I must approach

the works of the world poet in the language that most completely expressed him. She did not wish me to read English poetry with the children at all, because Byron was not suitable for the young and we had never had another poet. I may have looked surprised. At any rate she repeated what she said in a louder voice and gave as her authority a lecturer on English literature whose course she had attended when she left school.

"The lecturer must have been very ignorant," I said.

"There is no such thing in Germany as an ignorant lecturer or an ignorant teacher," she told me. "In France and England there is ignorance everywhere; but not in Germany."

I did not carry on the argument. By that time I had been some weeks in Germany; I read the *Hamburger Nachrichten* every day as a disagreeable duty, and I had become quite used to hearing things said and seeing things written about England that were as stupendous as they were untrue. I had no idea till I went to Hamburg that the Germans were in a state of ferment about us and I could not understand why the Plessens wanted me and the Crefelds wanted Miss Campbell since we both belonged to a nation without a redeeming feature. I do not intend to dwell on the crusade against England and the English that has been carried on in Germany for years and officially fomented in the press and elsewhere. We know more about it now than we did before the war, but even now he have little idea of its extent and thoroughness. At first I hardly noticed its manifestations or felt them; but by degrees it began to vex my soul. Then I gave up the *Hamburger Nachrichten* and read Ger-

man plays and poems at night when I had a little leisure. There were not many books about; at least Aunt Susan would have thought so. It was a large handsomely furnished flat belonging to well-to-do people, but their whole library was contained in a cupboard with glass doors standing in one corner of the dining-room. However, I saw complete editions of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing and Heine there and I asked Frau Plessen if I might borrow a volume as I wanted it. She looked decidedly unwilling but said I could do so if I did not turn down the pages or leave the books open face downwards. I said I would not only promise that but I would have clean hands when I read and make no finger marks. She took this quite seriously and showed me a novel Mamsell had read and which I should have touched with a pair of tongs if I had to touch it at all. I could write a Hymn of Hate about people who use books badly or borrow them and keep them; but naturally Frau Plessen did not know that I had been brought up amongst books. The little house at Chelsea was full of them and Aunt Susan and I were both readers.

When Sunday came I changed my dress in time for dinner so as to be ready for Miss Campbell when she called for me. I put on one that Mrs. David had given me the summer before and which had been bought for Isabella. But for some reason Isabella had not liked it. When Aunt Susan saw it she said it must have cost as much as the two of us spent in a year on clothes and she only half approved of my accepting it. I never could feel like that myself about Mrs. David, because it was natural to her to give with both hands, especially to anyone young; and she would

have been hurt and puzzled if I had refused. It was a fine white embroidered lawn and I could see that I did not look penniless in it. When I went into dinner wearing it the others had sat down to table and Marie was carrying round the plates of soup that Herr Plessen ladled out of a big tureen. Frau Plessen stared at me sourly and did not speak. Herr Plessen seemed to receive a slight shock, but not a disagreeable one, for I saw the ghost of a smile on his face that I often saw when a child did something it ought not to do and he was more inclined to laugh than to reprove. Herr Heiling bid me good morning and did not take his eyes off me.

"Our Miss has made herself beautiful to-day," said Oscar, and putting his hand on his heart he made me an impertinent little bow.

"Miss is at all times beautiful," said Trudi. "even in bed she is beautiful."

"Trudi!" called Frau Plessen sharply.

"And in the swimming-bath," continued Trudi, whose mind was so slow and thorough that when she started on a theme she was not easily diverted. "I have not before seen anyone with such small white feet and also her legs . . ."

"Trudi!"

"Miss Danvers swims?" said Herr Heiling hurriedly; but he was laughing and so was I. I could not help it and I did not see why Frau Plessen should look so sour. If you take a child's inconvenient remarks seriously you make more of them than you need.

"Miss always laughs," said Arthur, who was my favorite amongst the children. He had grave blue eyes

and a grave way with him that attracted me. "Even when we make mistakes in our English she laughs. It is agreeable to study with her."

"Yes," said Olga. "Our Papa chose very well. He found our Miss and brought her with him to Hamburg." This remark was addressed to Herr Heiling.

"And I've told you every day for weeks that you are not to call me your Miss," I cried, "I won't have it."

"Very good," said Oscar, "we will call you our Sally."

"Yes," said Arthur, "Sallee is good. Sallee, I kiss you."

He blew me a kiss across the table and I looked at Frau Plessen to see how she liked it. I think she was divided in her feelings. It suited her very well to have the children contented with their Miss, but I am sure she did not endorse their opinion as to their father's choice. When we all got up from table and the two men went into the living-room for coffee she stayed behind for a moment and told the children that they were to play here by themselves this afternoon and make no noise. Then she turned to me.

"Has Frau Crefeld invited you for supper?" she asked.

I said I did not know, as the invitation had been vaguely worded. She then told me that the best way to get back would be to take a steamboat across the Alster that called at a pier near the Crefeld's house and ended its journey just opposite the flat. As she talked I could see her appraising the details of my dress all the time and deciding that it was unsuitable for a Miss. Finally she spoke:

"I suppose your dress was given to you?" she said.

I wished I could have said that I bought it or made it myself; but anyone whose habit it is to tell the truth knows how the habit persists even when a lie would confound an adversary. I signified that her judgment was as usual sound. The dress had been given to me.

"Doubtless by Mrs. David?"

Again she was right and again it annoyed me that she should be.

"It is a peculiarity of the Jews," she went on in her most guttural tone. When Frau Plessen meant to make herself unpleasant she became more guttural than usual whether she was speaking German or English. "They like to have Christian dependents and satellites to whom they can be free-giving."

"Generous!" I suggested. "Free-giving is not the English idiom; but you can speak of people giving freely."

She had told me to correct any mistakes she made in English, but I did not often do so because when I did she colored with annoyance and disputed my corrections.

"Generous is not what I mean at all," she said now. "Generosity is a virtue. To give people finery that does not become their situation in life is a folly."

"If you do not like what I wear I will go home," I observed.

I spoke without animus or heat, but I meant what I said and that seemed to nonplus her. She did not want me to go home at that time.

"You are too sensitive," she said. "A young girl who has to fight her way through the world should

learn not to be sensitive and to take a counsel offered by an older woman in the spirit in which it is given."

It is easy to put another person in the wrong when the other person by the etiquette of his position is deprived of his power to reply. I had not said I would go home until she had been grossly impertinent, but if I had told her so I should have had to go and I did not want to yet. She could be very disagreeable, but Miss Campbell was disagreeable too, and I thought that perhaps it was just the north German manner. Mrs. David had told me that I should find it chilly and forbidding. Besides she scolded her husband, her children and her servants as arrogantly as she scolded me; and they all put up with it.

I had not thought of anything to say and we were standing together near the window both feeling rather uncomfortable when Herr Heiling came into the room and brought his aunt a cup of black coffee.

"English fashion!" he said to me as she took it.

"What is English fashion?" I asked, not understanding him.

"In England men wait upon women. In Germany women wait upon men. Have you not observed it?"

"I should think I have," I said, for only that morning Herr Plessen had sent me in to the next room for his newspaper. "I'm trying to teach the boys better."

"But I prefer to drink my coffee where I am accustomed to drink it," said Frau Plessen, and marched through the communicating door into the living-room. "Come, Casper."

Casper lingered. He lingered an appreciable time and came nearer to me at the window. The children were at the farther end of the big room, huddled over

a jig-saw puzzle that he had brought them the day before.

"If I were Trudi . . ." he murmured in an undertone and then as I looked at him in surprise asked me what I was doing this afternoon. I told him.

"Next Sunday I will take you and the children for a sail in my boat," he said and raised his voice. "Do you hear, children? Next Sunday we shall go on the Alster in my boat and we shall have coffee at Eppendorf."

IX

THE people you like or dislike unreservedly present no difficulties. You seek the one kind and avoid the other. It is the people you like in bits who intrigue you. In some moods Herr Heiling attracted me. He had a way with him, a merry friendly way that carried all before him. He was a fortunate youth and knew it and made the most of his opportunities. I gathered that he was the only son of wealthy people, that when he had finished his education he had been in London for a year and in Paris for a year, in business in both cities but as a "volontaire," an unpaid apprentice learning the language and the ropes. He had always had plenty of money in Paris and introductions to the *haute bourgeoisie*. In London his friends had been of German origin to judge by their names, but he took them for English and charged what he found fault with to the English nation. In Hamburg he was supposed to live with his father and mother in their villa on the Uhlenhorst, where, the children told me, there was a fine garden and a hedge of sweet brier.

"A *Hecke* is there," said Trudi, "a long *Hecke* of well-smelling field rose. It smells to heaven."

I was supposed to give all the children a cut and dried conversation lesson every day besides talking

English to them between times; and when conversation is cut and dried it helps things on to set a subject.

"To-day," I had said, "you shall describe your uncle's house on the Uhlenhorst," and they began to chatter like magpies at once.

"It is not a house; it is a villa," said Olga, "a fine villa."

"A billiard is there," said Oscar.

"But it is not allowed that we play on it," said Arthur.

"Once when no one was near those boys did play and they did cut the cloth," said Olga.

"They did cut the cloth," said Trudi, her eyes growing big with the solemnity of the crime. "So they became a whipping."

"*Mek, mek!*" jeered Oscar and snapped his fingers at her. "Boys make nothing of whippings. The girls it is who cry . . . silly geese!"

"Tell me about the garden," I said when I had tried, without much success, to explain that you could not become a whipping in English though you might get one. For Oscar seemed to think that my discourse on the respective values of *werden* and *bekommen* were an admission that there was no such thing in England as discipline and he said that he and Arthur both wished they lived there.

"By us there is too much," he said gloomily; and then Trudi made her remark about the sweet-brier hedge and I tried to correct it; and Frau Plessen said at supper that if we laughed so loudly we must have the conversation lesson in a room further from her own as we had disturbed her; and that perhaps it was the English method to treat a lesson as a joke, but

that she did not approve of it. After that I tried to think of subjects that would not lend themselves to laughter, such as some well-known episode in history or any story of heroism not too tragic for their years. I found that my history was not their history, nor were my heroes their heroes; but that did not hinder discussion. On the contrary. They were for Blücher and I was for Wellington; they impeached Nelson and I apotheosized him. We were defeated in America. They were victorious at Sedan. The Boer War was a crime and we should have lost it if the Kaiser had not told us what to do. The Kaiser would some day take all the English colonies and rule over them in the German way. *Deutschland über Alles*. But Britannia rules the waves.

"What are waves?" said Oscar. "Battles are fought on land."

"You forget, Oscar," said Olga, "our future lies on the water. The All-Highest has said so."

I sometimes wondered what English children of their age in English schools were saying and thinking about Germany. Nothing at all unless English schools had changed since I left one five years ago. My ignorance of German history and even of German geography and politics made the Plessens purr when they came across it. They told me that the navvies mending the roads in Germany were better educated than our public schoolboys. I did not like to tell them that although the children were taught a great deal very carefully they were taught some of it wrong. They would have wanted me to prove it, and how could I prove that we did not owe our power to our crimes, or dispute that our power was decaying

and would crumble like the walls of Jericho at the first blast of the German trumpets. I did not believe in the crimes, but I did not know whether we should crumble when Germany attacked us. I wrote to Aunt Susan and told her what the Germans were saying and how the *Hamburger Nachrichten* wanted our heads on a charger, but she did not seem to take much interest in it. She said that she had always understood that the Germans were learned and industrious but not polite and that when she had gone abroad she had chosen some part of France or Italy. I was to remember that I need not stay a day longer than I wished, as her home was always open to me and she had just had my bedroom re-papered.

Sometimes the thought of my bedroom in the little house at Chelsea came between me and the humors of the moment with a tug at my heart strings. I wished myself there again, amongst my own books and pictures, at leisure and alone. I saw it with my mind's eye while Frau Plessen was making herself disagreeable about my dress, because I remembered the day it had come and how I had put it on and then run into Aunt Susan's room to show it to her. "Fine feathers make fine birds," she had said, but I knew by her eyes as well as by the long glass in her room that I was a rather pretty bird that day as well as a fine one.

Miss Campbell came for me at three o'clock and looked rather put out when she saw me, and she said that she had left all her elegant and expensive clothes in Paris because she did not expect to want them while she was devoting herself to educational work in Hamburg. I said that my case was different. I possessed

very few clothes, came away at a day's notice and brought the best I could. She accepted this explanation graciously, and after she had looked carefully round the room and told the children they were going the wrong way to work with their puzzle we started for our walk. It was a hot summer afternoon, the Jungfernstieg was crowded with people and I was in the best of spirits. Everyone and everything looked unlike the King's Road on a Sunday afternoon, for instance, and I have to admit that Hamburg looked better. It is a splendid idea to build a big city round a lake, even if the lake is artificial and has hard concrete dams for its shores. The beauty of water takes care of itself when there is a big enough expanse. I never tired of watching the life on it and the play of light and wind on its surface. Besides, as we got on we were able to turn round and see the church spires of Hamburg and the packed roofs behind the Alster front. At least I turned once or twice or stopped to look about me, but Miss Campbell would not let me linger long. She said that Hamburg was a notoriously wicked city and that it behooved young girls like us to walk circumspectly and always straight ahead. She said other things and then she asked me whether many young men visited the Plessens and whether I had opportunities of getting to know them.

"I have not seen any young men there except Frau Plessen's nephew, Herr Heiling," I told her. "They have people to supper sometimes, but I am not with them in the evenings."

"Herr Heiling! You mean the young one, Caspar Heiling?" She made a little sound with her lips that was nearly but not quite a whistle; and she smiled

knowingly. By that time I wished I had not come out with her. If I could make a wicked city good by talking of its wickedness in gloating whispers I'd talk day and night; but if you can neither rescue nor prevent why should you discuss? I have no sympathy with women who determinedly go through life in blinkers; but I have still less with those who are sheltered by the social system themselves and batten by hearsay on the muck heap. It is a difficult distinction to make because there is such a thing as a legitimate interest in the facts of human life; those facts most of us pick up here and there as we can; too often from the wrong people and in the wrong way. I only speak of it because Miss Campbell made me uncomfortable and I want to admit that in this matter I stood betwixt and between. I sometimes wished Aunt Susan had been less shy with me and more outspoken; but I turned a deaf ear to Miss Campbell because I instinctively disliked her tone. Besides, I would not discuss Caspar Heiling or the Plessens with her. I had not been born in an attic and bred in a kitchen.

I think that by the time we reached the Crefeld's flat we both knew that we should never make friends. At any rate she said as we went upstairs that she had only approached me at the instance of Frau Crefeld and that in general it was her rule not to associate with the young women who lived with Hamburg families as governesses and Mamsells. She said that they were her social inferiors and that though she was far from being a snob she believed in drawing the line. How did I feel?

If I had answered honestly I should have said I

felt sick, but then I should probably have had to explain in what way and why. Besides I've no doubt that even George Washington had to be civil to people he did not love. I always envy people who can do this without feeling untrue to themselves. However, the uneasy mood in which I had walked upstairs vanished like mist in sunshine directly I saw Frau Crefeld and shook hands with her. She seemed to be waiting for us, for she stood in the open doorway of a room opposite the front door, and the moment I saw her kind eyes and heard her friendly voice I felt at home with her. She spoke English with a strong German accent, but not as Miss Campbell did, with a guttural Cockney twang, and she herself and her room looked German in every detail. So did the little girl with bright dark eyes who stood shyly beside her. The mother kept my hand in hers, drew me into the room and looked at me before she led me to the sofa. I can't tell you what she thought of me, but my first impressions of her did not change much as I got to know her better. To my eyes she did not look Jewish as the Davids did or even as her own child did. She was a big woman, fair-haired and deliberate in her movements. She had blue eyes as kind as kind, but not alert. She was handsomely dressed and yet the general effect was rather frumpish. She did not seem to be thinking about herself at all but about the people she was mothering or directing or entertaining. She told me that the Davids were old friends and that Mrs. David had written to her about me more than a week ago and told her that I was Isabella's friend.

"I should have written to ask you here," she said, still keeping my hand in hers and looking at me as if

to do so gave her pleasure. "But Miss Campbell told me she had already made your acquaintance. I hope that you are happy in Hamburg?"

"Yes, I am," I said, for on the whole I was happy. I did not regret coming.

"I have asked an Englishman to supper to-night to meet you," she went on, "but I have not told him that you were coming. It shall be a surprise."

X

MISS CAMPBELL went out of the room to take off her hat and left me alone with Frau Crefeld. We sat on the sofa together and I had been long enough in Germany to appreciate that. Frau Plessen never asked me to sit beside her on the sofa. At first she had seemed to fear that I should do so uninvited and had quickly occupied the middle herself so that I could not plant myself there, too, without crushing her. Then she had told one or two stories, presumably for my benefit, about the sanctity of sofas and the presumption of certain persons who pushed themselves into places of importance meant for their superiors. So I told her that I had heard of the peculiar dignity attached to sofas in Germany, but that annoyed her because she said there was nothing peculiar about it and that we did just the same in England. When I first got to Hamburg I imagined that I knew more than Germans did about my own country. But I soon discovered that whenever we disagreed they were in the right because they were so much more instructed and intelligent than we were. When I heard Frau Crefeld talk English with a German accent I was afraid she would be instructive and intelligent in the admirable but rather fatiguing German way, and I was disappointed. However, we

had not been long together before I knew that she was not going to be fatiguing at all, but friendly and rather amusing. When we had known each other about twenty minutes she told me that her mother had been a Christian, that she had lived in London with her parents till she married and that she had hesitated a good deal before she consented to marry an Israelite and live in Germany. She said that she had drawn a big prize in the lottery of marriage as I should see presently when Herr Crefeld came in and that if she had a dozen daughters she could not wish them a happier fate than her own. She asked me a great many questions about the Davids and about Isabella's marriage, and when I told her that Isabella was now called Saddington and not Schlösser she clapped her hands and laughed. She told me then that the good Miss Campbell had also this bee in her bonnet inasmuch as she was the daughter of a certain Moses Cohen who had been a "*Schlemihl*" and had died leaving his children penniless. Her father had assisted the widow and children and had begged her to take Rebecca for a time so as to give her a new start. She had tried to earn her bread in Paris and had lived with her married sister there, but the plan had not been successful. The brother-in-law objected to her.

My sympathies were with the brother-in-law, but I did not tell Frau Crefeld so and I did not say that when Rebecca had written me a note the other day she had signed herself Rosamund. It seemed a pity that she could not change her face and voice as well as her name for these gave her away even to me, and I have not an eagle eye for an Israelite. I wondered

what Moses Cohen had done in the world and in what way he had been a *Schlemihl*. Mrs. David had told me what *Schlemihl* means and what a terrible fate it is to be related or allied to one, for a *Schlemihl* may be quite honest and well meaning and even industrious, but everything he undertakes will fail and bring disaster on himself and his belongings.

"Now I will tell you about the Englishman who is coming here to-day," said Frau Crefeld. "He is a Mr. Quentin Hope. He is in Hamburg on business. He is still young but my husband considers him very solid and thinks he will go far."

Before she could say anything more about my fellow-countryman Herr Crefeld came into the room and I was presented to him as "the young girl about whom our dear Mrs. David wrote to us last week." We shook hands and received swift impressions of each other while we exchanged those commonplaces of talk that act as an accompaniment to the hymn of life, dislike or indifference playing its first chords in one's fancy. I did not expect him to take any interest in me at all. He was more than twice my age, a man of affairs, a man of property. How can there be anything further apart than a girl's mind and the mind of an elderly business man? His thoughts must be forever on his speculations and his argosies I fancy, and I see more romance in his ventures than in the average girl's occupation with her lovers and her clothes. But Herr Crefeld did not look romantic and you would not even have guessed from his appearance that he had turned out a matrimonial prize. He was a thin, sallow, sandy-haired man, with funny little side whiskers, pale blue eyes and a nervous smile. If I

had had to bring off a deal with him I should have expected to get the best of it when I saw him, but I should have been mistaken. He was one of the richest men in Hamburg and he had made every penny of his money himself. I did not know these things when I first saw him but I was told them later by various people who all spoke well of him. He made me very welcome and I feel sure by the way he looked at my frock that he approved of it but knew it was expensive and wondered where I got it. Before long Miss Campbell returned with Gisela and her manner in the presence of her employers was not as arrogant and disagreeable as usual. Then a man-servant wearing white cotton gloves brought silver trays bearing tea and chocolate and cakes, and as we sat down to them there was a ring at the front door and a moment later Mr. Quentin Hope joined us. He brought England with him, and for the first time since I had left England I felt home-sick. I could have stroked his coat, I felt so glad to see an English coat again, an English coat on broad English shoulders that I could hardly have reached unless I had stood on tiptoe. An English tongue, too, that spoke as our educated people do, and an English manner quiet and direct. The little girl Gisela took possession of him, calling him Uncle Quentin and asking him when he would take her sailing on the Alster again.

"I came in my boat to-day," he said, and the child crowed with delight and turned to her mother for permission to go out with Uncle Quentin after tea. Mr. Hope told Frau Crefeld that he had his new boat which would hold us all and that if Frau Crefeld felt inclined we might get to the Outer Alster and have sup-

per at the Kronprinz on our way back. He just glanced my way, as he unfolded his programme, just long enough to show Frau Crefeld and me that I was included in it, and I believe that he was amused to see the rapture with which I listened to him.

"Shall you like that, Miss Danvers?" said Frau Crefeld to me.

"I've been six weeks in Hamburg and I've not been on the Alster yet," I said. "I'm dying to go."

"But where are you staying?" asked Mr. Hope.

I told him I was staying on the Alte Jungfernstieg and he looked rather puzzled because the Alte Jungfernstieg is close to the Alster and most of the little steamboats call there. I had only to cross the road and go down a few steps to board one. But I had never done it because I had never been out by myself yet, and because on week days Frau Plessen's children took no walks except the one they took every day to school and back again, and on Sunday we had always had a walk, too, in a different direction. I wondered why the Plessens used the delightful waterways of their city so little, but they had no boats of their own and Frau Plessen would not let the children go on a steamboat if she could help it. She disliked them as your London mother dislikes a 'bus, considering the crowds who travel by them plebeian and probably infectious.

"Miss Danvers does not know how to stand up for herself," croaked Miss Campbell in her high pugnacious voice. "With a woman like Frau Plessen it is positively necessary. She is evidently unable to distinguish between a lady and a servant. I should know how to deal with her."

I did not want to talk about the Plessens to the Crefelds or to air my wrongs, if they existed, at that table. I had not meant to explain my position to Mr. Hope for I had no reason to assume that he was interested in it. But he did look at me with some accession of interest when Miss Campbell shed a light on my obscurity and as our eyes met I saw the color of his for the first time. Till then I had known all about the tweed of his coat and a little about his manner and his clean shaven strong face. I had liked them, but best of all I liked his eyes. They were honest eyes, and they were serious, the eyes of a man who has good brains and uses them. I got an impression of what Frau Crefeld meant by calling him solid. She meant his spirit, not his body; and his spirit looked at you out of his eyes. For a moment I had an odd disturbing sensation, one to which I would not allow myself to give way. I wished I had not come. I wished I had not seen him. I made up my mind there and then that when I got back I would think as little of him as he would of me, and I knew how little that would be. He was a prosperous man, trafficking all day with the ends of the world, sending out his merchandise and watching other goods come in. His mind must be full of his ventures and his work. There was no room in it for me, a country-woman, but a chance acquaintance. We were not likely to meet again, for the Plessens were soon going to the country and were taking me with them, and Mr. Hope talked of going to India for the winter. He had said so soon after his arrival to Herr Crefeld who had nodded and approved.

"Are you living with the Plessens?" he said to me.

"Yes. Do you know them? I teach their children English."

"I was there to supper about a week ago," he said, and our eyes met again.

"I have my evenings to myself," I explained. "I like it. I am able to read and have a little peace."

"I hope that you always read German," dictated Miss Campbell. "You ought not to touch an English book while you are here. If you bring passages you cannot understand to me I will assist you with them."

XI

OUR boat sped across the shining water, its white sails bellying to the breeze. There was neither dust nor jar, but only swift smooth progress, cool air, other boats about us, and in the distance the roofs and steeples of Hamburg baking in the sun. Mr. Hope did not talk because he was busy with his boat and I did not talk because there was so much to see. I liked watching his management of the boat. He had long capable-looking hands and he was quietly intent on what he was doing. Frau Crefeld sat beside me and told me the names of the places we were passing. Miss Campbell had brought a book with her and was reading it. She explained to us that she had often seen the Alster before and considered it more profitable to read than to sit idle. Gisela sat next to me with her hand in mine and whispered in my ear that she loved me and that I must come to see them every Sunday. Herr Crefeld was not with us, but he had promised to meet us at the restaurant at seven. All the happy people in Hamburg seemed to be on the water that afternoon. There were little and big sailing boats, some flying with the wind as we were doing and some tacking in the face of it as we had to when we turned home again. There were ordinary rowing boats, too, and the little steamers laden with Sunday traffic, and

long, slender racing boats manned by strenuous lightly clad young men. Every garden restaurant was crowded; in some a band was playing and from another men's voices singing folk songs floated across the water. The first time we passed them they were singing:

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Du bist ein edles Reis,
Du grünest in dem Winter,
Als wie zur Sommerzeit!

Warum soll ich nicht grünen
Da ich noch grünen kann?
Ich hab' kein Vater, kein Mutter,
Der mich versorgen kann.

It sounded most attractive to me, but Miss Campbell said she could not enjoy a poem in which a fir tree complained of having no father or mother, because everyone knew that trees did not have fathers and mothers and could not answer when spoken to. She liked intelligent poetry that dealt with the facts of life. She tried to get Mr. Hope to agree with her but he was busy with his sails and only murmured something about liking the sound of music across the water. I could not help seeing that she paid great attention to Mr. Hope and that he seemed anxious not to notice it.

Soon we got past the singers to a quieter part of the environs of Hamburg where there were new country houses with gardens reaching to the water and sometimes a boat with people in it landing or coming out. In those boats I saw young men and women as one does at home on any lake or river where a waterway adds a joy to life and offers youth its

pleasant opportunities. I wondered whether I should be joining in this side of life again next Sunday and whether Herr Heiling would sail his boat as well as Mr. Hope did. But I did not look before or after for long during those charmed hours. It was enough to sit in the stern of the boat and watch the shores of the outer Alster as we raced by them and after the heat and dust of the streets to enjoy the cool evening on the water. For the sun had set by the time we had turned and got inside the Binnen Alster again and landed at the restaurant where we were to have supper in the garden. To my mind it was late for a child of Gisela's age to be up and eating with her elders, but I saw other children doing the same thing. I was glad she was there because we were in the same mood of absurd childish delight, and I am sure that as we walked hand in hand through the crowded lighted gardens we trod on air. She whispered to me that never before had she been allowed to have supper out of doors in Hamburg though she always had it so in the summer when they were away from home, and I whispered to her that the whole scene was what she justly described it: "*Himmlisch*" and "*entzückend*." I should not have used those words myself for a big restaurant garden raised above the water, crammed with people and lighted by electric light. But they served well enough just then for the gayety and good spirits that communicated themselves to all of us as we sat down at the table reserved by Mr. Hope and discovered that we were generally hungry. Such a good supper it was; beginning with lobster salad, continuing with duck and peas and coming in the end to strawberries and

cream. Gisela ate everything offered to her and I, remembering my own suppers at her age of a glass of milk and a biscuit, wondered if she would have nightmare. But Frau Crefeld watched the child placidly and said she did not believe in coddling the digestion. It was just as well to give the stomach a surprise occasionally. Miss Campbell looked at me with a visible sneer on her face at this, and though I did not respond I thought that Frau Crefeld noticed the sneer and felt annoyed with both of us. Soon after the party broke up for Mr. Hope had to take his boat back and the Crefelds had ordered their car to meet them. They said they would send me home in it and when I proposed to walk looked rather scandalized.

"You cannot walk about Hamburg after dark," Frau Crefeld said to me; and by that time she had recovered her good humor for she gave me a warm invitation to spend my Sundays with them whenever I could get away. She said that I could always make my arrangements with Miss Campbell when we met at the Kindergarten and that when they were not using the car she would send a maid with me as far as the steamboat pier near them. Mr. Hope said nothing when he shook hands with me and I thought rather forlornly that I might never see him again. For the Plessens were about to leave home on their annual holiday and by the time they returned Mr. Hope would be setting out for his winter in India.

We did not have the expedition to Eppendorf proposed to the children by Herr Heiling. He spoke of it the day after I had been on the Alster with the Crefelds but Frau Plessen looked coldly on the plan

and in that household things did not happen unless she approved of them.

"No! Caspar," she said. "Sunday picnics on the Alster are not to my taste and I should have thought they were not to yours. Leave Sunday junketing to servants and to Jews."

If an Englishwoman had behaved as Frau Plessen did I should have been hurt and angry. But I never lost the sense of adventure while I was in Hamburg and when you are out for adventure you expect to meet varieties of people, pleasant and unpleasant. Besides, Frau Plessen was so mightily pleased with herself and her place in the world that she was amusing even when she was in an unamiable mood. The way her large mouth set itself in determined lines, the high nasal tones of her voice, the opulence of her attire and the elaborate waves and puffs of her tow-colored hair never failed to fascinate me, and when she was inordinately rude I deplored her want of manners but did not let it oppress me.

"How unfortunate it is that we are not Jews," said Arthur, whose face had fallen to zero when his mother vetoed the Sunday excursion. "To them everything is allowed and to us nothing."

"It is true!" said Olga. "I wanted a pink frock this summer but Mamma said it was Jewish and bought a blue one."

I laughed. I could not help it. To attach a creed to a color seemed so childish and arbitrary; but Herr Heiling, catching my eye, offered an inadequate explanation.

"The Jews like staring colors," he said. "It is their Oriental blood."

I had not observed it. The Davids and their friends dressed unusually well and never loudly. Frau Plessen was a figure of fun compared with them. Yesterday Frau Crefeld and Miss Campbell had both worn gray, and Gisela had been in white. However, I did not give tongue to my thoughts because I had discovered by this time that I was no more equipped for an argument about Jews in Germany than I should have been for one about Home Rule in Ulster. I did not know enough of the situation or share sufficiently in the prevalent tenseness of feeling.

"Did you enjoy yourself yesterday?" Herr Heiling said to me.

"Very much," I told him. "Mr. Hope took us out in his boat and we had supper with him at the Kronprinz."

Frau Plessen appeared not to hear what I said, but I am sure she did because her mouth went down at the corners and she spoke sharply to Trudi about helping herself to too many strawberries. Herr Plessen who rarely spoke at all at meals looked up from his paper and said to me:

"So you have met Mr. Hope . . . *ein prächtiger Kerl*. . . . You hear Ottilie . . . Miss Danvers knows Mr. Hope. We must remember that next time he comes."

The way the best of men put their foot into it! Frau Plessen looked thunderous and said she did not intend to give any more supper parties till the autumn as she would be fully occupied now with her preparations for their journey to Schöndorf. I asked where Schöndorf was and she told me that it was in the Frankische Schweiz, not far from Bayreuth and that

they were going there because there would be trout fishing for her husband.

"A gentleman gets so dull if he has nothing but the landscape to amuse him," she said. "The gentlemen like an occupation. Otherwise they are not in good humor."

"Are you going to be there long?" I asked.

"A month. Then we are going to stay with my mother near Eutin for three weeks. But I cannot take you with us there. She is old and does not like strangers."

I wondered what was to become of me but I did not ask. However, Frau Plessen went on to inform me that I should not be able to return to the flat because Herr Plessen would have ended his holiday and be at home again, and it would not be considered proper for us to be under the same roof without a duenna. She thought, however, that Fräulein Popper an elderly friend of the family who lived in a *Stift*, would be able to take charge of me for a small consideration. I should be expected to consider it a holiday and pay my own expenses.

I was rather surprised to hear that and said that before closing with Fräulein Popper I must consult my aunt, as I was entirely dependent on her and had no money of my own. She then asked me various questions about my aunt that I considered irrelevant and unpolite. She wanted to know her age, her state of health, the amount of her income and whether it was derived from dividends or an annuity. I told her that Aunt Susan was sixty and in excellent health but that I knew nothing whatever about her money affairs. I thought it rather unlikely that she would

support me in Hamburg for three weeks and I was averse to asking her. I should prefer to be paid a quarter's salary and if necessary live on it. I knew that Marie's aunt let furnished rooms and that I could probably have one for five shillings a week.

"Marie's aunt! A beautiful room it will be! Where does she live?"

"In a heavenly old street with a narrow canal between the houses; and the houses have gabled roofs and warehouses near the water. Frau Bach lives on the fifth floor and if you stretched out of the window you could shake hands with your opposite neighbor, just as Kay and Gerda did in the Snow Queen."

"But how do you know all this? Have you been there? I will not allow my children to be taken to these slums," cried Frau Plessen.

"I've not been there yet, but next time I am out by myself I'm going," I said. "I will not stay in the *Stift* with Fräulein Popper. If I am to be on my own I will lodge with Frau Bach. Otherwise I will go back to England."

XII

WE argued the question without heat a little longer. Frau Plessen was really indifferent to what became of me while she went to Eutin so long as I was off her hands; but she pointed out that the proprieties would be better satisfied if I placed myself under the wing of a highly respectable person like Fräulein Popper than if I lived unprotected in a quarter of Hamburg that might be picturesque but was not considered genteel. I said that as no one in Hamburg knew me it could not matter much what I did or where I lived for a short time, that three weeks would pass like a flash and that before anyone had noticed my absence I should be on the top note of respectability again in the Alte Yungfernstieg.

I did not want to spend three weeks with Fräulein Popper because I had seen her several times and disliked her. She was acid, quarrelsome, offensively hostile to England and the English. She lived in one of those almshouses for maiden ladies that Germans call *Stifter*, and when she came to see us her conversation always turned on the petty intrigues and jealousies of the inmates. When she was young she had spent three months in Liverpool with German relatives, and on the strength of this experience she knew more about my countryfolk than I did. She had a very

low opinion of them in every way and said extraordinary things about English girls. She expressed her surprise that the Plessens took one into their house and told the most sensational stories of what had happened to virtuous German families who had harbored British serpents in their bosoms. They were stories I hardly understood at the time, but I could feel the venom that quickened them. She was a singularly ugly woman with oily hair covering her ears like beetles' wings, a yellow wrinkled skin and sharp shifty brown eyes. She knew the Crefelds slightly and talked of them with a disparaging note in her voice as "those rich Jews"; and she was at daggers drawn with Miss Campbell whom she usually spoke of as Fräulein Cohen. I would not have spent three weeks with her if I could have got into a workhouse and at last I said so plainly to Frau Plessen. She did not understand my point of view and told me that Fräulein Popper only stated facts with regard to English people and that their moral, industrial and military decadence could not be disputed. If you have never come across folk who talk of your country in this way you can have no idea how difficult it is to dispute their statements and put them in the wrong. I had no statistics at my fingers' ends, precious little history, and a narrow personal experience. You may say then as they did, that I was too ignorant to have an opposite opinion. But I had one all the same. Every word spoken against England stirred my faith in her and my affection, the affection that had life-long roots in little things and that exile seemed to increase. But I am feeble in debate and I fear that I did not take up the cudgels for my country as a more instructed

said that in Bavaria everyone drank beer as a matter of course and that she considered it safer for the children than milk or water. So Herr Plessen had a big glass and we had little glasses and he told us that if we drank it every day for a month we should all become fat and comfortable. After supper Frau Plessen and I unpacked our trunks and put away our clothes and the children's. We had four bedrooms on the first floor. I had a little one to myself that delighted me. It had a wooden box bedstead with an enormous feather plumeau instead of an eiderdown quilt, a big old-fashioned sofa with a table in front, a chest of drawers and a washstand. Every day while I was there the painted floor was washed all over, the bedclothes were of linen, rather coarsely woven but very soft and clean, and embroidered with big monograms. The windows looked on the Kurhaus garden and beyond that on hill and forest. At night, however hot the day had been, a cool scented air came in from the pine trees, and early every morning I was waked by the little gooseherd who always piped the same song to his geese and called them to follow him for the day to the common land between the low-lying meadows and the forest. Sometimes our walks would take us where he lazed the hours away midst his flock, and at dusk I often managed to be in the main village when he came back again because I liked to see the birds separate themselves and waddle home cackling to each other about their affairs as busily as we cackle to our kind about ours. The children were as fond of the village as I was, and when we could we loitered there. The houses

were all detached and everyone seemed to be an inn at which summer guests were boarded and passers-by ate and drank at all hours of the day. The landlord of the inn was usually a good advertisement for his own wares. He either sunned himself outside his house or drank beer with his customers inside, the picture of digestive satisfaction and good humor. He usually had what our rude forefathers called a round belly and as far as I could see he did nothing to earn his living except draw beer and distribute it. But the women of the household worked like blacks. They did all the cooking and cleaning, they waited on their guests, they fed the animals they owned, they helped to harvest the crops and they fetched the water they used from the village pump in heavy buckets, and they staggered up and down the hilly roads with loads on their backs that looked more fit for ponies than for the mothers of men.

A stream with bridges across ran right through the village, leaving room on either side for the country carts yoked with oxen and laden with produce or with timber that passed up and down all day and at times by night. Even in the Kurhaus, which was set a little apart from the village, I could hear the crack of the driver's whip as loud as a shot from a gun and let off with the same insouciance at midnight as at mid-day. Oscar and Arthur both bought themselves whips on the first opportunity and practiced cracking them with so much danger to themselves and everyone within reach that Frau Plessen on receiving a flick from one boxed their ears impartially and took both whips away. I never saw anyone so ready with her

hands when it was a question of discipline. In fact, I had heard of people having their ears boxed but I had never seen it done till I went to Germany. She had a way, too, of giving a child a sudden hard slap across the mouth that turned me sick, for she wore heavy rings, and the two girls told me how they dreaded a blow of this kind and how painful it was. But they took correction for granted and Frau Plessen administered it in a matter-of-course way without hesitation or concealment. She said that the most modern theories advocated education by kindness, but that she believed in an occasional pepper of severity.

"A child must learn that it has no will of its own," she pronounced. I did not agree with her and said so, but she paid no attention to my opinion. She gave me to understand that American and English children presented an awful warning to the world because they were so spoilt and unmanageable. I said that I knew nothing about American children but that English nurseries and schoolrooms were managed well. Of course she knew better. She informed me of what took place in England and she informed a family of Americans staying at the Kurhaus of what happened in New York. They lived there and she had never crossed the Atlantic but she contradicted them flatly on various points and bridled with offense when they laughed at her facts. You could not convince that woman that she did not know everything.

"My aunt is a charming woman," said Herr Heiling, "but she has always ruled the roost. She is Sir Oracle, and when she opes her mouth no dog may bark."

He had arrived in Schöndorf unexpectedly the day before and we were sitting in the forest with the children. He had just picked up a pocket volume of Shakespeare I had with me and had opened it at that scene in the Merchant of Venice where Gratiano reproaches Antonio for his melancholy.

XIII

WE had all been sitting at supper at the Kurhaus the day before when Herr Heiling walked into the *Speisesaal*, and in his most genial manner bid us good evening. The Plessens looked surprised, more surprised than pleased, but Herr Heiling was in such high spirits that a little want of warmth could not affect him. He kissed Frau Plessen's hand with an air of being pleased with his own chivalry. He complimented her on her looks and admired her gown. He did not literally smack his uncle on the back, but he seemed to bubble over with joy at seeing him; and he told his young cousins that he had come all the way from Hamburg on purpose to take them to the fair at Waldorf on Sunday. Me he greeted politely, but otherwise ignored. But after supper when the children had gone to bed I went into the garden which was nearly as light as by day that evening because the moon was at its full; and I had not been there long before Herr Heiling joined me.

"My uncle is playing *Skat* and my aunt is sitting with other ladies," he said. "I asked her to come out but she is afraid of the night air."

We walked up and down one of the main paths once or twice, meeting the same people each time we turned: two couples, visibly amorous and clinging to each other sentimentally.

"Take my arm," said Herr Heiling before long.

"No, thank you," said I.

"Why not?"

"I'm going in now."

"It is more agreeable out here. We will go for a little walk."

I suppose I ought not to have given in to him and gone for that little walk, but I enjoyed it. I hardly know how to tell you how much I enjoyed it. We went out of the Kurhaus garden right through the sleepy, empty village and a little way into the woods on the other side. We talked about German fairy tales and I felt quite happy and at ease. He told me that I must read "*Die Versunkene Glocke*" and "*Hamnele*," and that when he got back to Hamburg he would send them to me.

"How long are you going to be here?" he asked.

"Three weeks longer."

"And then, when my aunt goes to Eutin?"

"I am coming back to Hamburg."

"Impossible!"

"I've taken a room in the Melkstrasse. I'm going to be there by myself for three weeks and read German from morning till night. I'm looking forward to it immensely."

He got quite angry and said his aunt ought to know better and that he would speak to her seriously tomorrow.

"If you do I will never forgive you," I told him. "For three weeks . . . and what is three weeks? . . . I am going to be on my own. I might have gone to Fräulein Popper's *Stift* but I refused."

"Why did you refuse?"

"I detest Fräulein Popper."

"So do I! *Alte Klatsch-base!*"

We both laughed and the sense of youth was with us, youth and mischief and a world that is youth's kingdom. For us the moonlight, for us the moist heavy fragrance of the pines that night, for us a cameraderie that did not reckon with the boundaries of convention.

"I will come to see you when you are at the *Melkstrasse*," he said.

"Yes, do," said I. What else could I say? I saw no harm in it. From the beginning I had liked him with reservations, and that night I whistled the reservations to the winds and made up my mind to take him as he gave himself, an admirer beyond doubt, but one with whom it behooved me to walk delicately because of the difference at that time in our positions. I had complete confidence in my own sense. I was as ignorant of life as girls of my home history still are at my age. I had picked up the ideas of the marketplace about the relations of the sexes and to tell the truth I was finding out, as Aunt Susan said I should, that the career of governess in a private family is not an agreeable one. Aunt Susan had never talked to me at all about love and marriage. Mrs. David had talked of marriage as a social arrangement depending chiefly on your financial circumstances, and Isabella, before she met Mr. Saddington, was all for love, the right to motherhood, elemental passions and the glorious crowded hours of union blessed by Nature but not by Society. Isabella, you may gather, was a goose, but she cackled with a chorus whose

voices had sounded in my ears directly I got away from Aunt Susan's drawing-room in Chelsea. It was not a chorus in which I had ever felt disposed to join. I've been a fool in my time, as you will see if you have patience, but I've never been the kind of fool who thinks the world has waited all these years for the whipper-snappers of a generation to teach it everything.

"To-morrow we will come out again," said Herr Heiling, as we parted at the door of the Kurhaus, and he held my hand a moment longer than he need have done as he bid me good night.

I trod on air as I went upstairs. I was not going to fall in love with him if I could help it, but he was undoubtedly in love with me and I liked him well enough to feel exhilarated and interested. I wondered what would happen next and how the Plessens and his family would take it if ever he announced his intention of marrying me. They would not like it probably, but I did not suppose they could raise any serious objection. However, remembering the story of Al-naschar, I would not let myself dwell on the future. My business in the present was to make up my mind whether I liked him well enough to let him play the lover here in Schöndorf, and more or less behind the backs of the Plessens. I'm not secretive by nature and the idea of a clandestine courtship offended my taste. At the same time all my ideas of courtship were English and I was used to hear of mean and women who arrived at an understanding before their friends knew what they were at. Besides those moments of gradual approach when the world is not let in yet are not moments to throw away. Next

morning when I went down to breakfast he was there before me. We met without witnesses and his morning mood was what his evening one had been.

"You look happy," he said.

"I am happy."

"Because I have come?"

"Oh! No!" I cried, with such conviction that his face fell and I realized that I had been uncivil. If I had been adroit I might have conveyed an unpalatable truth in a more inoffensive way.

"I enjoyed our walk last night," I went on, trying to make good, "but I've enjoyed myself every minute of the day since we left Hamburg. I love being in Germany. To be in this village is like living in a fairy tale."

"You make the best of things. It is your nature. I have known you now some time and I have never seen you out of temper. I am not surprised that my little cousins find you agreeable to live with. You have an instinct for the art of life. It is rare."

While he talked what I should call nonsense he was evidently pleased by my appearance as well as by my disposition, for his eyes never left me, and when I asked him if it was going to rain he said something about my plain blue linen frock and what a pleasure it was to see a woman dressed *point device* for the breakfast table. He hated a *Hausrock*.

Just to annoy him I said I thought they were sensible thrifty garments. Frau Plessen always had her breakfast and did her housekeeping in what I should call a dressing-gown at home, and about eleven o'clock she titivated for the day, taking a long time over it.

She did her hair then, too, wearing a sort of boudoir cap over her head all through the early hours of the morning. Of course she did not show herself in this guise at the Kurhaus. She usually wore what she called a *Reisekostum*: a coat and hobble skirt of the shiniest gray alpaca, heavily braided, well made and yet so unmistakably German in cut and taste that you would have said *Deutschland über Alles* if you had met it in Mexico. Or was it the woman herself who gave her nationality away? She came into the *Speisesaal* as I stood talking to Herr Heiling, showed us both that she was as cross as two sticks, asked me why the children were not down, and addressing a waiter told him to bring breakfast. He went off at a double quick pace to do her bidding and she turned to me again.

"Well, Miss Danvers, are you going to fetch the children? Must I speak twice?"

Fortune favored me. The four children, as neat as a row of pins, entered the *Speisesaal*, bid their lady mother good morning, asked Herr Heiling what time they were to start for the fair and fell upon their father who joined us just then with a request for extra pocket money to spend at the stalls and on the merry-go-rounds. I had naturally not gone downstairs until I had seen that the girls were ready. They had loitered behind me to try to find a nickel coin supposed to have hidden itself in the sofa in their room. The boys were not my business, but I often gave them advice gratis about their finger nails. They still wore sailor suits though they were years too old for them in my opinion, and to-day they had come down in white ones in honor of the fair.

"But it makes me angry to hear my aunt speak to you in such a tone," said Herr Heiling, finding his opportunity later in the day. "It is not the way to address a young girl who is educated and doubtless sensitive."

We were at the fair which was a church feast held once a year in a neighboring village. My hands were full of large heart-shaped gingerbread cakes given me to guard by the children while they rode on the merry-go-round under their father's eye. Frau Plessen had not come with us. She said fairs were plebeian and that the crowd at a village fair would be smelly. The rest of us had walked there through the woods, and before we went to the fair we all dined at the best inn in the village. It was a gala day for the children and for me. We had roast goose for dinner and hot pancakes sopped in wine that Herr Plessen told me were called "tipsy maidens," and the children and I drank white wine and seltzer water with sugar in it to make it fizz. After dinner some of us were in a hurry to get to the fair, but the men would not stir till they had had coffee and smoked big cigars. To this day when a cigar is lighted that scene comes back to me: a wide valley with a village at the head of it, the hotel garden a little way up one of the hills, our dinner table set in the shade and the blazing sun outside it, people at other tables, waiters scurrying to and fro carrying piles of plates and as many mugs full of beer as a conjuror could; in the distance the braying of a band and the booths of the fair, the children happy and excited, but struggling with the drowsy sensations that were the aftermath of their long walk, a hearty meal and a con-

urning thirst, Herr Plessen the picture of contentment and good humor, and Herr Heiling opposite me, his eyes telling me a story I could not fail to understand. At least I thought I understood him better than I understood myself.

XIV

THREE weeks later the Plessens went to Eutin, and I went to my eyrie in the Melkstrasse. For the first time in my life I was going to be as independent as every self-respecting bachelor girl desires to be in the twentieth century, and I looked forward to my time there without a qualm. I had very little money; hardly enough to keep body and soul together, but that did not trouble me. My body was so well nourished with the Plessens that I thought it would do it no harm to live plainly for a while. I was not getting fat because I am not fat by nature; but I was in the pink. I had just told Aunt Susan so and she had replied that she was glad to hear it, but wished I could have conveyed the same information in different words. I had not told her how entirely on my own I was going to be, because I did not want her to worry. I knew I could take care of myself in Hamburg or anywhere else; but I knew that people of Aunt Susan's age are all haunted by some idea of danger to the young that they cannot or will not explain. There is the bugbear of propriety too. She might have said that it was improper for me to be living by myself in a foreign town. Frau Plessen thought so, but let me do it because it suited her. I did not mind much what Hamburg thought, because I was not going to stay the rest of my life there; and

I knew that London would not be inquisitive or censorious when I went back. Apparently it was my youth that made the adventure improper—my youth and my looks. Because Fräulein Popper and other maiden ladies lived by themselves, unimpeached. However, here I was, established in my room on the fifth floor, free to come and go as I pleased, having my own door key. I went out for a little walk the evening I arrived so that I might use it.

Nothing happened, but I did not stay out long. I would have rambled through the city and enjoyed it if I had had another girl with me; but a girl by herself is at a disadvantage. Even by daylight that held good, I found. Miss Campbell had told me that she went everywhere by herself and at all hours, and that her deportment proclaimed her for what she was, a gentlewoman of immaculate behavior. I had rather built on her experience, because I knew myself to be well behaved; or perhaps I should say trained to a correct behavior in city streets. But it was borne in on me after a time that to be as plain as Miss Campbell must be of great assistance. I got uncomfortably stared at, sometimes followed and occasionally spoken to. It is not a pretty side of life to write about and I need not dwell on it; but I began to understand Aunt Susan's ideas and to think there might be something in them.

I had to go out to buy what I needed, to get air and to exchange a word here and there with a fellow creature. My landlady, Frau Bach, I hardly saw. She was a gaunt, anxious looking woman, evidently very poor and rather deaf. She let every room in her flat and slept in a cubby hole without a window that

opened out of her tiny kitchen. Every day she went out washing and charring. Before she left the house in the morning she brought me and presumably her other lodgers our coffee and rolls, and when she came back at night she gave me clean plates and tea things. That was the extent of her service. I made my own bed and dusted my own room. The other lodgers I never saw and hardly ever heard. One was a clerk in a bank and the other a school teacher, Frau Bach told me; and she added of her own accord that they were decent, well-seen men who had not liked the idea of her taking a young lady in as lodger, but that she had convinced them that I was an educated lady and of the highest respectability.

For a week I enjoyed my solitude. I enjoyed the novelty of it and the freedom. Then, after seven days of it, I began to discover that man is not made to live alone. I wished the Crefelds had been in Hamburg, but I knew that they were still away. I should have been glad to see Miss Campbell's disagreeable face and hear her tell spread-eagle stories about her folks in Paris. I even had some idea of looking up Fräulein Popper, but it was nipped in the bud through a chance encounter with her on a steam-boat when she returned my greeting so freezingly that she can hardly be said to have returned it at all, and when I attempted to speak turned her back on me. At the time I thought she must have heard that I refused to stay with her and felt affronted; but one day later on when she came to the Plessens she told me in front of everyone else that she considered pleasure excursions on the Alster highly improper for a young girl like me who had her living to earn and was at times

entrusted with the care of well-born children. There are various ways of saying Tosh in German but they are all rude, so I asked her in what way a passage of a quarter of an hour in a crowded public steamboat could be considered improper. She said it might lead one of a frivolous disposition to make undesirable acquaintances and that in fact she had overheard two young men speak of me. I asked her what they said, but she would not tell me and she hinted that I was probably vain enough already. She was a vinegar-bottle, poor old thing. It is annoying to be stared at when you are young but perhaps it would be still worse to be so unattractive that everyone looks away. I hope that I shall like young people when I am old and have a large tolerance for their follies and mistakes. I believe I shall, for memory makes short work of time and I shall look back at my own salad days when I thought myself wise and proved myself a fool.

People who have tried living alone and borne it will be severe on me for saying that at the end of a week I found the loneliness of life unbearable. Perhaps if I had persevered and lived alone for months I should have got past the depression that began to take me by the throat at the end of seven days. I am sure that if I had tried a bachelor life in London I should have enjoyed it, for I can stand my own company for a considerable portion of each day. But in London I should have had friends. They would have come to me and I should have gone to them at times. In Hamburg, that September, I could count the people I knew on the fingers of one hand, and the only one of them who spoke to me was Frau Bach when she brought me my coffee in the morning and my tea at

night. I worked hard at my German all the morning and at one o'clock went to dine at a little restaurant where you got quantity if not quality for a mark and twenty pfennige; about one and three pence in English money. It was not a bad little restaurant as far as the food and the people who kept it went, but, unfortunately, the customers were all of the sex that stares and even tries to scrape acquaintance however pointedly you indicate that acquaintance is not desired. There was one man who became a nightmare; a mean-looking nonentity with pale furtive eyes and a watery smile. I am sure that he thought his manner insinuating. It was the kind that edges near you if it can and whispers. I tried dining early to avoid him and then I tried dining late. He took to following me. The day after he began that I did not dine at all, but remained indoors until dusk, when I was driven out by hunger and the need of buying something for supper. Next day I tried to find a new restaurant and hoped my difficulties were over. But they were not. This time the man was big and red-faced with a chest he puffed out and bulging opaque blue eyes. He had a beard and was middle-aged. Probably he had a wife and children. I am sure he was old enough to know better. What struck me at the time and strikes me still was the crass stupidity and conceit of these pests. I am not describing them as especially German at all. They infest every big city. But I cannot understand why they do not reserve their attentions for their female counterparts: the dregs of humanity. What do they gain by molesting people whose gorge rises at the sight of them?

For several days I lived on a tin of American

corned beef bought at the nearest grocer's shop and did not go to a restaurant at all. At least I ate a slice of the beef for my midday dinner and a penny *Bückling*, a smoked herring that requires no cooking, with my tea at night. So I was saving money on my food hand over fist and in the flush of that discovery I bought several books I wanted and wondered why I had ever frequented restaurants where men congregate and stuff and stare. Probably no well conducted girl in Hamburg would do such a thing and I had brought trouble on myself by my ignorance of local customs. Therefore I persevered with the corned beef and the *Bückling*, and to this day I cannot think of either without repulsion. However, the *Delikatessen* shops of Hamburg are excellent, and I had a bewildering choice of galantines, sausages, raw smoked ham, cooked ham, smoked goose breast, caviare and all kinds of pickles and cheeses when I chose to spend my money on them. I was in no danger of starvation. There were quantities of fruit about, too, and always the best bread and butter I had ever eaten. The Hamburgers are epicures in food. But I had precious little to spend and had found a bookshop that tempted me irresistibly. So I suppose I did underfeed for the time being and perhaps got run down. Or was it the unaccustomed loneliness that vanquished me? Or was it both together with a week of gray wet weather on the top? When I looked out of my window I saw sheets of rain coming down straight and chilly on the canal and pattering on the boat idly anchored and apparently rotting where it swung. There was never a sign of life in the opposite windows. I think they must have lighted warehouses, but they were always

shut and so dirty that I could not see into the room. My old fancy about opposite neighbors who kept you company had not come true. Neighbors came in those deserted rooms; came and went like memories when you grow old. But they were insubstantial. Frau Bach had told me that these ancient houses had once been the dwelling places of rich Hamburg merchants and their families and that the one facing me had been built for a young man who brought his bride to it and lived there with her and their children until he died. They had occupied the very rooms I could have seen if the windows had been clean; on a lower floor there had been offices and on the ground floor the goods the merchant traded in and sent to the docks by the canal. Frau Bach's grandmother had been a servant in the family and so she knew a little of its history and told me that some of the children's children were still living in Hamburg and prosperous while others had sought their fortunes at the ends of the earth and fared, she knew not how. I wished I knew what the bride who came to those rooms had looked like and what she wore and how she passed her days; but I made a picture of her for myself and called her Minna because Frau Bach had spoken of one of the family by that name. She had golden hair and quiet, kind blue eyes, a thin, delicate nose and white hands that were always busy. Children were at her knees, servants waited on her orders, the head of the house came to her for counsel and consolation. I am afraid she was not original, that imaginary woman above rubies; but she was extremely sensible and competent. Not in the least like me. She wished for a leisure hour at times and I envied her because she was

pulled all ways by her world and wanted on all sides. She was never alone, never doubtful of herself, never out of spirits. I admire an equable temperament but I do not possess one. When I had lived by myself for ten days I began to think that the remaining eleven days of solitude would be more than I could endure and I had half a mind to damn expense and go to a pension where my fellow boarders would presumably speak to me occasionally even if they did not like the look of me or I of them. In making this confession I know I give myself away. There must be something wrong about me if the society of a cheap German boarding-house could hold out helping hands to save me from myself. I cannot explain it or defend it. I can only tell you that when I had been quite by myself for ten days I looked at an old man who sold newspapers and wished he would talk to me. But he was busy and turned gruffly away. Next day a letter from Frau Plessen informed me that her mother's health made it desirable for them to prolong their visit and that they would not be back yet. When I had read the letter I went out in order to be with people even if I could not speak to them. I boarded a steam-boat crossing the Alster and tried to make myself agreeable to an old lady who dropped her hand-bag and gave me a chance. But she looked at me suspiciously and said:

"Englisch!"

I nodded my head ingratiatingly and said that I was English and that the weather seemed likely to improve.

"Englisch!" she said again and I nodded again.

"Bandits!" she said fiercely.

I naturally could not nod to that. I shook my head and thereby infuriated her.

"Thieves!" she said and glancing at her hand-bag, the one I had just restored, she clutched it tightly to her.

I should have got up but I was afraid to move; for the boat had just stopped to pick up fresh passengers, and one of them was the red-faced man with a puffed-out chest and bulging eyes. He saw me, raised his hat and smiled.

XV

I TOOK no notice of him but he remained standing close to me and when the old lady got up at the next landing stage he sat down in her place. I turned my back on him but that did not stop him from speaking to me. He whispered in my ear offensively and I got up. He followed me. I should not have thought that even a man of the baser sort would molest a strange girl on a public boat, but this one did. I had not the courage to appeal to anyone else after the rebuff I had received from the old lady. No doubt I looked English and no doubt the English were unpopular in Hamburg. The *Nachrichten* and other papers were training their public in the way they were to go and I knew by this time that I was in an enemy country. If no one else had been in earshot I should have told the man that if he spoke to me again I should give him in charge to the next policeman we met; but I did not want a scandal on that crowded boat. It was not a dangerous or a dramatic situation, but it was detestable; and it ended suddenly. I have only spoken of it because the revulsion of feeling when Herr Heiling came on board was so strong that to this day I am sure that I know what a real heroine feels like when she is rescued by a real hero. Caspar Heiling and I have no qualities, I fear, for either post. You will see that if you read on. But at any rate he does not belong to that underworld in which the man

with the puffed-out chest and bulging eyes had his being. He saw me at once and saw the man at my side. We never discussed the matter, but I believe he knew at a glance what was happening. My face may have shown it and the man's attitude and manner. I felt hot and angry; I know my lips were set firmly and my eyes probably as indignant as my thoughts. The man hung over me, whispering.

Herr Heiling came towards me with the assured air of a friend. I was so glad to see him that I could not help letting him know it. We shook hands and began to talk. When I looked round my persecutor had sidled away and with a scowling face was watching us from the stern of the boat. Next time we stopped he got off and I never set eyes on him again.

"My aunt and cousins are still away?" said Herr Heiling.

"They will be away another three weeks," I said, "I heard from Frau Plessen this morning."

"Unpardonable!"

He spoke with heat and I understood him to mean that it was unpardonable of his aunt to leave me all these weeks alone.

"My uncle is staying with us," he told me. "He is not at home."

"I get off at the next landing-stage," I said irrelevantly.

We had been together about three minutes and in another two minutes I should leave the boat and walk back to my lonely room and my dinner of black bread and a smoked herring. I did not mind the dinner, but I was beginning to dread the interminable solitude of the day as a victim of insomnia dreads the night.

"You look ill. What is the matter?" asked Herr Heiling.

"There is nothing the matter," I said.

"You look thin. You are not having enough to eat. Where do you dine?"

I hesitated. He had no right to question me and no claim to my confidence, but he evidently did not consider that need give him pause. He had a quick, determined way with him that carried you off your feet if you were not on your guard; and he had a pride of sex that is exploded in theory and difficult to resist in fact. Besides he was a king in Babylon; and knew it.

"I dine where I choose," I said.

"Where are you going to dine to-day?"

"In my own room."

"What are you going to eat?"

"Black bread and a herring."

I did not mind telling him. I thought it would do him good to hear for once how the poor live; and I certainly did not want him to pity me, for I should not have pitied myself if I had only had a companion in poverty. But he looked horrified and incredulous.

"And after the herring?"

"Nothing! There is a great deal of nourishment in a smoked herring."

"What do you have for supper?"

I laughed and told him that I sometimes had an egg and sometimes a slice of sausage; and I tried to change the subject by telling him about the book-shop I had found and the books I had bought. But he was not interested in them.

"What do you do with yourself all day?" he said.

"What shall you do this afternoon when you have eaten the herring? Have you any friends in Hamburg?"

"Not one. The Crefelds are away."

"Do you mean to say that ever since you got back you have lived like a person on a desert island or like a convict in a prison cell?"

I nodded but did not speak. I began to wish I had not met him, because I was not in a sensible frame of mind. The prospect of three more interminable solitary weeks and the odious attentions of the man with the puffed-out chest had shaken my nerve.

"I may go back to England," I said, there and then envisaging a plan of action I had not contemplated before.

"Don't do that," he said. "Stay here."

"It would be running away," I mused. "I should hate to run away. Perhaps the Crefelds will be back soon. They said I might go to see them as often as I liked."

"Meanwhile you may see me as often as you like. I will call for you this afternoon when I leave my office and we will have supper together . . . in a garden. That is what you enjoy, I know."

I hesitated and then I consented. He looked so friendly and so good humored that I could not distrust him. What he proposed was unconventional, no doubt, but every twentieth century girl of my age prides herself on being unconventional. It would be a little adventure and I ask you what chance of adventure has a girl of my breed? None whatever unless she makes chances for herself. I went back and put my room in apple-pie order and as I did it I sang.

My spirits had risen sky high and I looked forward to the evening as an imprisoned man must look forward to release. The thought of it lifted the oppression that had weighed me down for days.

Frau Bach was out, so when I heard the bell I went to the door and let Herr Heiling in. I had not expected to feel shy, but everyone knows how one's feelings let one down at times, and how different the reality of a given moment often is from any forecast of it. However, I made my manner as matter of fact as possible, and took him into my room. He had brought me some roses and I had to go to Frau Bach's kitchen to fetch a glass for them. When I went back he was looking at my books, and I think they had given him ideas about me.

"So this is where you live," he said. "Here you study and here you eat your herring and black bread. A strange existence for a girl as young and beautiful as you."

I am not beautiful; far from it. But I could not dispute the point with him. I wanted to keep the interview at a matter of fact level and not let it last long up here. So I put the roses into the glass of water I had brought for them and set it on the table near my books.

"Shall we go?" I said. "I'm ready."

"But why are you in such a hurry? You haven't even asked me to sit down."

I suppose I frowned a little. At any rate I remained standing and on tiptoe to go. I was embarrassed by his presence in my room; I hardly knew why. But then, at that time, how little I knew about him or about any other man. I had lived the life of

a nun in a cloister with Aunt Susan and I derived my ideas from books and from the superficial intercourse of the drawing-room. I know now that Caspar Heiling was a young man whose *bonnes fortunes* were an open secret amongst his friends and that his reputation for gallantry did not injure him even with the strait-laced. The stories about him stamped him a sinner but not a villain. He had more money than was good for him and gave of it liberally to pretty ladies. He stood well with more than one young married woman. His parents wanted him to marry, but he had refused to woo some of the nicest girls in Hamburg. About this side of him his aunt and Miss Campbell had both dropped hints, but I understood life so little that they hardly affected my estimate of him. I found him attractive because he was always in a good humor, had more vitality than most folks, and a way with him that accounted perhaps for his successes. On looking back I still believe that he meant well by me in the beginning. But we both allowed circumstances to enmesh us more than we should have done. He ought to have considered where he was going and I ought to have been worldly wise.

"I can talk better out of doors," I said. "I am tired of this room. I have lived in it night and day. I shall be so glad when the Plessens come back. Is it going to rain? Shall I take a waterproof and an umbrella? I have my key."

"Then we may be as late as we like," he said. "I don't think it is going to rain."

He had been looking at every corner of the room with visible interest and approval; and now he commented on it.

"You are very tidy," he said. "I like that."

Then he followed me downstairs and when we were in the street I felt more at ease. We took an open taxi and had a long drive in it through environs of Hamburg I had not seen before; and I enjoyed that immensely. We got to a small hotel with a big garden full of people sitting at supper. It was on a hill and you looked at the river from it and the masts of ships.

"The cooking is excellent here," said Herr Heiling, and wanted me to make my choice of dishes. But I left that to him, for the sun was setting and the masts of the ships turned golden. I don't know why the sight of them suddenly made me homesick, but it did. The hotel garden was gay and crowded, a band was playing a Strauss waltz, and Herr Heiling, having ordered a sparkling Moselle, filled my glass with it.

"Why are there tears in your eyes?" he asked, and I felt angry with myself for letting them come. I was not a prisoner in Germany; I could go home any day I chose. So why weep at the sight of ships and the thought of my own land? Evidently I was out of sorts and in a silly mood.

"I think it must be the herrings," I said, and he looked surprised and puzzled.

"I have heard that onions make people cry, but I have never heard that herrings do," he said. "Besides there are none on the table. I have ordered stewed oysters and venison and an iced bomb with a chocolate sauce."

I laughed because he took what I said so literally and then I had to explain that my nerves had been playing tricks lately, but that I felt better already.

"I don't like being alone," I said. "If I stay on

here I think I shall go to a pension where there would be other people."

"To-day you have me," he said. "To-morrow you may have me again. I am at your service. Am I not enough?"

He lifted his glass laughing and pledged me in the sparkling golden wine; then he quoted our well-known English line:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes," he said.

XVI

WHEN I got back I thought things over and I decided that I would not dine at Herr Heiling's expense again. He had said that he would call for me next day and I had told him not to, but I did not much expect him to obey me. The evening out had done me good. I slept better than I had done for a week and next morning the sunshine streamed into my room and lighted up the red roses the young man had brought me. Deep red roses they were and sweetly scented. I put them near me while I had my breakfast and near me when I settled down to my morning's reading. Perhaps they reminded me that I was young and still had roses to gather and that the last gray lonely weeks were not going to last. I did not settle well to my books that morning, because my thoughts were on other things. I had to make up my mind to be sensible and firm. I thought I had succeeded, when five o'clock came and I heard the bell again. Unfortunately the more sensible I felt the less I looked forward to the days to come. I opened the door to Herr Heiling, looked at him and did not invite him in.

However, he came, and before I could stop him had gone into my room. He did not wait for me to go first and he let me shut the door. There were no easy chairs, but he sat down on the sofa and with a

peremptory glance commanded me to sit beside him. I took no notice of it but remained standing.

"Why are you not ready to go out?" he said.

"I am not going out."

"You are coming with me. We shall dine together as we did yesterday."

"No," I said and shook my head.

"Where will you dine, then?"

"Here."

"What will you have for dinner?"

"I don't know yet. I shall fetch something from the *Delikatessen* shop."

"Very well. I shall go with you and we will eat what we buy up here. If you want a picnic . . ."

"I don't want a picnic. I can't have one. Don't you see how impossible it is? You ought to."

"That is why I want you to come with me. We will go where no one knows us and where we can have a few hours together again. Be sensible . . . Sally."

He had never called me Sally before and I had not known before how much cajolery and tenderness a man can put into his voice as it lingers over a name.

"I want to be sensible," I cried. "That is why I will not go with you and why you must not come here again."

I stuck to my guns for a long time; until I felt quite tired and dazed. But that man had a tongue and a charm and a persistence that wore down all my carefully prepared little maxims. He put the comether on me so that I saw our case in the light of his convictions and my own doubts as the artificial fussiness of a prude. I had owned to being lonely. I was a

foreigner in Hamburg and not likely to be recognized. I came of a nation whose women are used to a comradeship with men that he thought wholesome and admirable. Why should I lag behind my own traditions and my own beliefs?

I could not speak plainly. I could not tell him that I would have gone with him more readily if I had not known that comradeship between us had become a fiction, and that we stood where youth and passion meet, either for our happiness or our undoing. I was surprised at myself. I had said that I would not go with him again and that he must not come to me; but I found that all my garnered wisdom of the intervening hours vanished like smoke in his presence; and that my determination gave way to his.

"Will you promise not to ask me again?" I bargained.

"To ask you what?" He pretended to be puzzled.

"To dine with you at a restaurant. Once was an adventure. Twice is an anxiety. A third time . . ."

"But why? Since we both want dinner why should we not dine together? To-morrow is Sunday. I am coming for you quite early in the morning. I want to take you a long way out of Hamburg where there is a great heath and a river and a little lake. We will have a day that we shall remember all our lives. It will stand out from the general grayness. It will be as warm as the sun and as purple as the heather. You have not drunk of life yet. You are not half awake. Everything is waiting for you . . . Sally."

I felt stirred by the passion in his voice and manner, but I was not quite carried off my feet yet; and there was one fact in the situation that to my mind

was sordid but uncomfortably prominent. I had no money for dinners and expeditions; and no mind to enjoy them at his expense. I knew it would be a delicate business to tell him so because he seemed to think that money was not a subject for discussion between us and that I showed a want of tact in mentioning it. I tried to compromise.

"I'll come to-night, then," I said. "But I won't come on Sunday unless I pay my own train fares and take my own sandwiches."

His laugh did one good to hear. It was genuine and boyish. He laughed at me now as he laughed at his little cousins when they said something that amused him.

"Good!" he cried. "You shall have your own way. We will have a day in the wilderness together. You shall bring the loaf of bread and I will bring the flask of wine. It will be enough for me."

"I still think of going back to England," I said a little later when we sat at dinner together in a hotel on the outer Alster. We had gone to it in a taxi, although we might have taken a steamboat, but he said a taxi would get us there quicker.

"How can you think of it?" he said, putting down his knife and fork, as if what I said took away his appetite. "What do you mean?"

I hardly knew what I meant myself or even if I really meant to go; but I was not in a calm frame of mind. I did not like what was happening to me and I did like it overmuch; more than anything that had ever happened to me before. Every moment of that evening comes back to me as I write and so do the surroundings in which I spent those charged hours.

We were dining in a big, half empty room in a corner near a window that faced the water. Other people were dining too, and some were young and some were old, but none of them were in one mood. You could see that by their faces. We sat next to each other with our backs to the room because we did not want to be stared at. I could not help knowing that I sat there with a lover, a man whose eyes told their story when they met mine and who was more restless and unsatisfied than I thought he need have been. He had not received any assurances from me yet, but then he had not asked for them plainly. When he did . . . I was beginning to think that I should like to be in England when he did . . . in my own house and with Aunt Susan. I asked myself what she would think of Caspar and he of her and I hardly knew how to answer.

"I have not seen my aunt for months," I said.

"What is an aunt?" he said impatiently. "Look in the glass and see if Nature has made you what you are for an aunt. You talk like a child. Isn't it time that you grew up?"

"I'm growing up fast," I said, and that seemed to please him.

"We will not come to these public rooms again," he said. "I can't say what I want. I can't even look at you. People watch and stare . . ." He shifted his chair suddenly so as to turn it still more on the room.

"Promise me to-night that you will not go back to England," he said.

"I must go back some time."

"Why must you?"

"I belong there."

"A woman belongs where she gives herself . . . where she loves."

What next I wondered; and my instinct was to stop him. He flurried me. I was not ready for a declaration then and there. To-morrow in the wilderness, perhaps; but not here in a public dining-room with waiters coming to and fro; and people watching us inquisitively. I looked at my watch.

"Why do you do that?" he said. "You are in no hurry. You have no one waiting for you."

"I'm afraid the shops will be shut," I told him. "I want to buy things for our sandwiches to-morrow."

He moved impatiently, made that angry click with his tongue that sounds like Tcha—and then laughed.

"You can look as you look to-night and yet have sandwiches on your mind," he said.

"But if they were not on my mind to-night they would not be in our hands to-morrow and then we should go hungry."

"Not at all. We should go to the hotel like sensible people."

"To-morrow," I said. "A long friendly day to-morrow and then we do not meet again until we meet at your aunt's dinner table."

"Who says so?"

"I do."

He looked at me, said nothing, called our waiter and paid his bill. Then he helped me on with my coat and we went out into the moonlit street together.

"Shall we walk back?" he said.

"But you live in this direction and I right over there."

"I am coming with you."

"There is no need."

"I hope you do not go out by yourself in Hamburg as late as this. Promise me that you never will."

He was solemn and persistent and I was inclined to be annoyed at him. But we had an agreeable walk.

"It isn't enough, though," he said as I bid him good-night. "Restaurants and streets . . . always restaurants and streets. *Ungemüthlich*. Why can't I come and see you in your room . . . where we could sit and talk . . . just for an hour or two."

"It does seem silly," I agreed.

"Then let me come . . . now."

I shook my head.

"I'm breaking rules enough," I told him. "I'm running risks, too. What would your uncle and aunt and my Aunt Susan say if they knew I'd dined with you two nights running and was going out with you for a whole day to-morrow? They would have fits."

"What are fits?"

"*Anfälle*. Attacks of illness caused by our shocking behavior."

We stood talking in the pavement for a minute or so longer. It certainly was a makeshift way of saying the lingering farewell we both desired, but as I told him, we had had a good many hours in which to say what we wanted to say.

"You enjoy tormenting people," he cried. "I've often seen it in your eyes . . . when you've been teasing my little cousins."

I bid him good-night.

XVII

WHEN I went to bed that night I knew that Caspar and I were very much in love with each other and I thought that we should probably return from next day's excursion a betrothed couple. There was no reason why we should not marry that I could see. He had money and I had not; but in England we were used to girls without money marrying as easily as girls who were well endowed. I did not consider myself his inferior socially. At least I knew I should not if we could have met at my aunt's house or amongst any of our friends. If anything it was the other way. Aunt Susan's friends and relations were mostly in the Church or the Services and not what she called "in trade." No doubt her distinctions and her prejudices were out of date. At least I gathered from the Plessens that they had their counterpart in Germany but naturally not in Hamburg business circles. However, I did not expect any serious opposition from my young man's family. At any rate I supposed he was prepared to overcome it. I thought he was probably independent of them financially, but I did not know. When I look back at that time I can see how surprisingly little I knew in some ways. I had never met his parents or been inside his home. There had been meetings between the families, but I had not once been of them.

Frau Plessen had contrived that somehow. I knew that his parents were elderly and did not go out much. I hoped they were amiable.

But as I went to sleep it was of Caspar himself I thought. I did not look at the future or make pictures of our life together here in Hamburg. I never got as near realities as that. I thought about little things he had said and done and about his eyes and the tones of his voice. There could be no mistake about those and I was wildly, warmly happy. The September sun shone into my room next day and I sang to myself as I dressed. When Frau Bach brought in my coffee she looked at me sourly and then looked at my roses which were faded.

"They may go away," I said.

"They should never have come," said she, and stalked out of the room.

I could not call her back and ask her what she meant. Besides I knew what she meant. Someone, probably one of her highly respectable lodgers, had heard Caspar's voice in the passage and in my room, and informed on me. It could not be helped, but it was annoying and must not happen again. I should have to tell Caspar so. I began to wish rather fervently that he would speak out and regularize the situation. The alternative was to part until we met at the Jungfernstieg again, three weeks hence. I was beginning to find out what others have found out before me. A clandestine romance may begin in the clouds but soon lands in the gutter. I hoped I had a soul above convention, but I had not foreseen that I might be spied on by my fellow lodgers and rebuked by my landlady. It gives you satisfaction to know

that your own soul is one of the largest size, but trouble comes when the souls of your neighbors do not match. However, I supposed it would soon be all right and on my way to the station I wondered whether Caspar would want me to go back to the Plessens this autumn. I had an odd sense of unreality about the future, although I knew beyond a doubt that he was very much in love with me; but I thought I should lose it—perhaps that very day. I did not dwell on the future more than I could help; but I did not turn my back on it either. I believed that I should have to make up my mind immediately whether I would spend the rest of my life in Hamburg married to a German; and I had to ask myself if the prospect pleased me. I thought it did. But I contemplated going to England for a time, chiefly to explain Caspar to Aunt Susan.

I got to the station first and had to wait in a large dreary waiting-room with a bar at one end of it, a bar at which beer and light refreshments were being served to Sunday travelers. There were a great many of them and they all looked extremely German to my English eyes. They were civilians, belonging mostly to the lower middle class and bore witness in their figures to the plenty and excellence of Hamburg food. Some of the women were mountains of flesh and had an inexplicable fondness for spurious tartan blouses and shiny gray alpacas. I think all the alpaca in the world must go to Germany, for men, women and children are clothed in it there. A good many men wore Panama hats and the little boys had knickerbocker suits heavily braided. Mothers of families carried long green tin satchels full of food and one party near

me had begun on their supply already and was devouring thick slices of gray bread spread with liver sausage. At the bar pert young women were serving mugs of foaming beer and having jokes with their customers, while at one table four or five officers sat together, separated from the plebeian crowd, their long swords trailing from their belts, their nasal voices and loud laughter dominating that part of the room. The only vacant seat I could see was in their neighborhood, so I took it and kept my eyes on the door expecting Caspar to arrive. I could not help knowing that the officers were staring hard at me and I could not help understanding some of the things they said; but they did not say anything I minded much. They saw at a glance that I was English, were pleased to approve of my looks and accounted for my being alone by suggesting that perhaps I was a suffragette. They said those things as if they hoped I might reply to them, but I looked past their table towards the door and wished Caspar would come. Instead of him I suddenly saw Mr. Quentin Hope, looking just as I remembered him that evening at the Crefelds, more than common tall, broad shouldered, imperturbable, dressed in rough English tweeds. I felt so pleased to see him that I bowed to him before I gave myself time to think, and only remembered as he came towards me that I was launched on an escapade.

We shook hands and he stood beside me for a minute or two talking as people do on such occasions of trifles that have no relation to what is really passing in their minds. I felt uncomfortable. At any moment Caspar might appear and Mr. Hope would see us meet and make off together. He would not tell

tales. You had only to look at him to know that, if you knew anything at all about Englishmen of his breed. But what would he think?

"I am going to Grünbeck," I said, for the sake of saying something.

"So am I," said he. "Have you been there before?"

As I answered that I had not Caspar arrived, came swiftly towards me without realizing that Mr. Hope, who stood with his back towards him, was there, and said in an intimate, frisky way that he had overslept himself and nearly missed the train.

"I had such pleasant dreams," he went on. "We were in your room together . . ."

He stopped in a petrified way, looked furiously annoyed, stared at Mr. Hope and made him a stiff, formal bow. Mr. Hope returned it with equal stiffness and in fact with unconcealed dislike, and without looking at me again he turned away.

"Most unfortunate," said Caspar, who, I could see, was now thoroughly out of humor.

I thought it was too, but not in the way he meant.

"The fellow will tell everyone he met us."

"He will do nothing of the kind," I said indignantly.

"Did he promise?"

"I didn't ask him."

There was no time to say more just then, because the doors of the waiting-room were thrown open, an official bawled the names of the stations to which the next train was going, and we were hustled on to the platform with the excited, hurrying crowd. Every compartment had more people in it than it was meant to hold, every window was shut, and as we steamed

slowly and heavily along I wondered, as I had often wondered before, why the Germans said they did everything better than anyone else and why so many English people believed them. Under the circumstances it was impossible to talk to each other till we got out of the train, and when we did we walked some way along a bare, dusty country road still with a throng of Sunday travelers and still influenced in our mood by the stuffy discomfort of the journey. Ahead of us, we both saw the towering figure of the Englishman, his long, leisurely stride taking him swiftly over this arid mile of road.

"Why has he come here? Is he alone?" asked Caspar.

"He seems to be," I said.

"It isn't likely. Probably he has an appointment. But he has been clever enough not to let us see his companion. One does not spend a Sunday at Grünbeck alone."

"If he is hard at work all the week he probably likes a long walk on a Sunday," I suggested.

We had just come within sight of a countrified looking inn with a large garden at one side in which there were tables and chairs.

"I shall order a table indoors," said Caspar, walking across the road. "If possible we will have a private room. I want no more encounters."

"But I have brought sandwiches," I cried, holding up my package. It was not a very big one and Caspar looked at it distrustfully.

"That!" he said and laughed. "We'll eat that now. I have a hunger! also a thirst."

"But I said I would not dine with you at a hotel

again," I persisted. "It was a bargain. You promised . . ."

He laughed as one laughs at a child—who argues in favor of the impossible.

"One must eat," he said, "and why eat badly when we can eat well? I will be as romantic as you please before dinner and again after dinner, but I will not go without my dinner if I can help it."

"But you promised——" I began again and again he laughed as one laughs at a child.

"I wanted you to come. You have come. What more is there to say."

I tried to frown and feel angry, but he had more or less recovered his good humor and I knew him well enough to know that he would certainly lose it again if he did not have his own way. After all it did not matter much now that we were here. If it was going to be such a day as he had offered me and I had pictured it must be harmonious from beginning to end; and it had not begun well. We had both been ruffled.

I stood by a little bridge over a narrow stream and watched the village geese while he went into the inn. Most of the Sunday travelers had vanished. Village children, the boys with cropped heads and the girls with pig-tails, stood a little aside and stared at me. I had a sudden idea which at the moment seemed a good one, and I opened my packet of sandwiches in their sight. They were fresh buttered rolls with slices of sausage between and I felt hungry when I saw them. So I ate one of them and offered them to Caspar when he reappeared. He looked round as if to make sure no one saw him, muttered something

about a colossal hunger and finished two in a twinkling. What remained we gave to the children.

"If we are going to dine at the inn we shall not want them," I said, and he agreed that I was right. Sandwiches, he said, were very well as a snack, but not as a stand-by.

XVIII

WE struck a path across a great heath and got away from the crowd. The heather was in flower still but beginning to fade a little at the tips. There was a great deal of bilberry and bracken amongst it and the growth was high, so that we were glad to keep the path. It was one of those brilliant early autumn days when the light is warm and golden and the near distance is veiled in delicate haze. The larks rose as we passed by and their song quivered above us rapturously.

"This evening we shall hear the nightingales," said Caspar.

"But this evening we shall be in Hamburg again," I reminded him.

He cut at some bracken tops with his stick and I could see that he was thinking his own thoughts. For that matter so was I. I had never seen him out of a city before and it was in a city that he belonged. His interest in the landscape was lukewarm and the nightingales were to act as orchestra to our duet. I was bred in a city too, but I had more love of the country in me than my companion. I knew that by the way we looked about us.

We came after a time to a wooded stream on the confines of the heath and made our way along it over moderately rough ground. I did not mind the scramble but my beau did. He had on rather light

kid gloves and soiled them. He scratched his boots, slipped once and stained his trousers, disarranged his immaculate tie and tore one of his silk socks.

"I told you it was folly to walk where there was no properly made path," he growled.

For it was I who had wished to keep close to the stream and follow it a little way; because I had seen a kingfisher and would have gone through anything to see it again.

"A bird is a bird," said Caspar. "Why make such a fuss about it?"

"We will sit down here in the shade and keep very still," I said. "Perhaps it will come again."

"There are no seats."

I found one where we stood on soft dry moss with the trunk of a tree to lean against; but at first he would not sit there with me.

"We shall both get rheumatism," he prophesied. "To sit on damp earth is dangerous."

I laughed at him and he did not like that. "It is true," he insisted. "To laugh at what is true is not intelligent."

So he stood against the trunk of an oak tree with one arm over a low growing branch and looked at me.

I am now about to describe a love scene, so if love scenes of an inferior quality bore you, as they do me, you must skip a few pages and go on to what happened next. I consider love scenes tedious unless they are sustained by passion and poetry or enlivened by humor, and I fear that the little one on the Grünbeck heath was wanting in every quality that should have made it impressive. But it is engraven in my memory as an amazing prologue to the act that followed on its heels.

"To-day you look *reizend* . . . *reizend*," he began. "I cannot take my eyes off you."

"Then you will probably miss the kingfisher," I said, keeping my eyes firmly fixed on the stream.

"Why don't you look at me? Am I less to you than a bird who is not even there?"

"He may come . . . at any moment."

"If he comes he will fly away again. I am here, waiting for you to look as deeply into my eyes as I have long since looked into yours."

I knew the German idiom. He meant that he had fallen in love with me and wanted me to be in love with him. Well, I was; but the moment had not come to tell him so; therefore I continued to sit still and look out for the kingfisher.

"Child," he began again, "beautiful child!"

It didn't sound so silly in German as it does in English; and he spoke German that day. But he stopped short after he had called me a beautiful child and when he spoke again he spoke impatiently.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" he asked, and before I could answer him he was beside me on the moss and had my hands in his.

"What about rheumatism?" I said.

I don't think he heard. He was pale with excitement and before I could stop him he had kissed me. I didn't like it. The love scene was going wrong. My head ought to have rested contentedly on his shoulder and tears of happiness ought to have welled from my eyes. But something was wanting. I hardly understood what myself. I wrenched my hands away and waited for what he would say next.

"You must know," he stammered; "you must understand . . ."

"What do you want me to say?" I asked him.

"Can I speak more plainly?" he asked me.

I thought he could, but it was not my business to say so. Besides, the difference of nationality counted for something. I knew a little by this time of what happened when Germans became formally engaged, but I did not know much about what went before. However, he made some things plain during the next few minutes. He had fought hard against it, he said, because he had met me in his uncle's house. He knew that we should both be blamed. But he was past considering that and he hoped I was too. Love burst all bounds when it was strong enough.

"But will there be great difficulties?" I said. "Will your father and mother object?"

He gave me an odd troubled glance and did not answer.

"You are such a child," he said presently. "But you do love me," he went on, getting hold of my hands again. "You know what it means to have come here with me to-day . . . and to have been with me yesterday . . ."

I did not speak, but he did not seem to mind that as long as he could keep my hands in his and occasionally . . . well, I told you it was to be a love scene and I cannot deny that we both acted our parts. But I could not shake off my vague sense of uneasiness. If he loved me and wanted to marry me why did he not say so; if he loved me and could not or would not marry why had he said anything at all? I had elemental and insufficient ideas of some things in those

days. I knew there were girls men married and far away in an unknown world girls called "bad" who had relations with men they did not marry. I even gathered from what I had read and heard that amongst girls of that kind there were differences; these being the victims of a love affair, like Effie Deans or Mrs. Gaskell's Ruth; and those being much painted and powdered, wearing fine tawdry clothes and walking past one in the dusk of a winter afternoon in Regent Street or Piccadilly. I thought I knew a great deal; all a woman of my world need know of that other underworld in which men find pleasure and women ease and tragedy. That I should be invited to touch the fringe of it had not crossed my mind. I believe I told you at the beginning that you would get out of patience with me for a little fool. At least you will if you have no understanding of girls brought up in old lavender as I had been, their limitations and the armor of their ignorance.

"Stay here with me," he murmured. "Don't go back to Hamburg. I will go in for a few hours every day and come back here to you, my little sweetheart."

I shook my head.

"No," I said, "that won't do and you know it."

He grew impatient. He said he could not understand me. He called me cold and prudish. He did his best to persuade me and I could see that he had set his heart on my doing as he wished. While he argued he held me in his arms hoping, I suppose, that his ardor would overwhelm my defences and that I should give in. But I did not lose my head to that extent even when he told me that I was breaking his heart.

"But after all . . . one must to some extent . . . think of appearances." I put it to him.

He went off at a tangent again, said I was playing with him as a cat plays with a mouse and asked me if I thought Gretchen would have spoken so to Faust or Isolde to Tristram.

"They were tragedies," I said. "You and I . . ."

"Well! You and I! A young man and a young woman . . . deeply in love with each other . . ."

"But everyday people. Besides I want to be happy and ordinary."

"I will make you happy if you will trust yourself to me. I will give you everything you want. I could get away for weeks very soon. We would go to Italy together."

I really did not know what to make of it. Was he proposing to me and sketching out a honeymoon? I dare say I looked as uncertain as I felt, for he suddenly called me an adorable child and snatched me to him again. It was an agitating hour.

"You will come," he cried overjoyed.

"To Italy! I should think I would," I said.

"I could not go for a fortnight."

"I could not go so soon."

"Why not? You would write to my aunt. She would think you had gone back to England."

I stared at him and his eyes first met mine boldly and then turned uneasily away.

"My mother made a runaway marriage," I said.

"There is nothing a man values and admires so much in a woman as *hingebende Liebe*," he replied.

"Love is surrender."

"After all we needn't settle everything to-day," said

I. "The first thing I must do is to write to Aunt Susan and I suppose you had better write too."

"I! Why should I write to your Aunt Susan?"

"To tell her."

"Tell her what?"

"Well what you've been telling me ever since we got there. Not in the same words of course. But if we are going to Italy together she must know about it."

"What is she like, your Aunt Susan? Does she take broad views of life? Would she let you go? What experience has she had herself?"

I tried to explain Aunt Susan to him but I did not succeed very well.

"When we are in Italy we can write to her," he said. "We will not let anyone know beforehand what we mean to do."

I was just going to tell him that if he wanted to go in that secret way he would have to go by himself, when we heard someone coming straight towards us through the trees, and before we had time to tidy and compose ourselves as completely as we wished Mr. Hope appeared, saw us, lifted his hat to me and went by. I wondered how much he had seen in that moment, and whether my face gave me away as plainly as Caspar's start away from me, his ruffled hair and the angle of his hat betrayed him.

"That man again," he said in a vexed undertone. "What bad luck!"

"You see the world is always with us," I moralized. "One can't be too careful. This is my last escapade."

XIX

WHEN Mr. Hope had passed us Caspar looked at his watch and found that it was high time to get back to the hotel. Otherwise we should only get the remains of a meal while more punctual people would have consumed the best of it.

"If we had not given away our sandwiches we might have stayed here and eaten them," I said regretfully.

"Sandwiches are no meal," said Caspar. "I have hunger."

I had not. The sandwiches I ate on the bridge would have lasted me till the afternoon when I should have been content with a cup of tea, and I disliked the idea of going to that hotel with Caspar now that I knew Mr. Hope would probably be there too.

"I think I'll wait nere for you," I said. "I'm not hungry."

He would not hear of it. He said he would not enjoy his meal without me and that it was childish to play tricks with one's digestion and that he had ordered a bottle of champagne to be put in ice for us. He had great faith in champagne and its effect on the temperament. After it he hoped that I should see eye to eye with him and be ready to drink deep of life and love.

"If you always refuse your chances what lies before

you?" he asked. "Will you tend children till you are old and gray? What outlook have you?"

I had never given a thought to the future, and I had no idea what my circumstances would be after Aunt Susan died. As long as she lived I knew I could have a home with her, but she had never told me whether she had money to leave and whether it would be left to me. I realized my ignorance that day at Grünbeck. But I said nothing about it to Caspar. He had offered me his arm along the narrow winding path beside the river and we walked together slowly as lovers do, glad to be close together and paying less heed to what we talked about than to the happy chances of the hour, the sunshine, the plashing of the river against the steep sedgy banks and in places the thicket of overhanging trees through which we had to push our way. At least I enjoyed all that, but he said he would be glad when we were on the broad path across the heath again and that though he was as good a walker as any man he hated a scramble.

"I should like to live in the country," I said.

"Then why do you refuse to stop here now?" he asked.

I did not try to answer him. It would have been going over the old ground and we should have arrived at the same point. I was not accountable to anyone while the Plessens were away, but I thought I would stay where they expected me to be; in my attic with my cross old landlady who disapproved of my roses. If happiness was on its way to me it could find me there as well as anywhere else.

"I believe you have an obstinate disposition," said Caspar.

"I don't think I understand you," I said, and moved from him a little so as to face him more easily.

"But I am madly in love with you . . . quite madly," he said. "If you would only give me some hope."

I remember that, standing there beside that little river, I flushed and smiled; and because it did seem at that moment as if I had been impatient and that he was waiting on some word from me.

"Surely I've said enough. I've come here to-day. I've listened to you."

I hardly know what he answered and it does not matter. We walked slowly back to the hotel, both feeling rather ecstatic but both, I know now, inwardly uncertain and disturbed. At the door of the hotel we parted because before sitting down to table we wanted a brush up and I was shown upstairs into one of those large rather bare but well-kept bedrooms you find anywhere in Germany. When I looked at myself in the glass I had a shock. I had not dreamed that my face could tell such tales without my knowing it. There may be cold, impassive English women but evidently I was not one of them. I had not known that my eyes could look so large and bright and my cheeks so flushed. Also, my hair was untidy and my white frock rather crumpled. I did not approve of myself at all and I was vexed to think that when Mr. Hope passed us by he saw two people obviously a prey to violent emotions. To him at any rate we had given ourselves away.

I was so anxious to look cool and tidy when I went downstairs again that I spent some time in the bedroom. There was no one in the hall at first when I

arrived there, and I waited a moment for Caspar to appear. I thought it would be pleasanter to go into the *Speisesaal* in his company than alone. I could hear a great clatter on the other side of its doors and guessed at a crowd of people dining there. An elderly man whom I took to be the host came through once or twice with bottles of wine but he was too busy to stop and speak to me. I had just made up my mind to go in by myself and look for Caspar when the door opened and Mr. Hope came into the hall. He shook hands with me at once and asked me if I was staying in the hotel.

"No," I told him, "I've only come for the day."

I did not like to tell him I had come with Herr Heiling. Besides he must have known it.

"I'm just going in to lunch," I said.

"I've had mine. They give you a very good lunch here. Are you still with the Plessens?"

"Yes. At least now Frau Plessen is away . . . but she is coming back soon."

He waited a moment before he spoke again and I, thinking we had said all there was to say made a move to the door. But Mr. Hope detained me with a question as surprising as it was upsetting.

"Did you come here to-day with Herr Plessen?" he asked.

I looked up at him to discover his meaning and I was astonished to see how serious his face was.

"He is in there with the Heilings," he said.

"The Heilings!"

"His relations . . . the people who live on the Uhlenhord. The young man is their son."

I looked down at the floor meditatively and won-

dered what I had better do. Should I walk boldly in and approach Herr Plessen? Was Caspar in there? Where was he and what would he do?

"For you, *Fraülein*," said a waiter at my elbow, and handed me an envelope on which my name was written in Caspar's hand. I took it and the man went back into the *Speisesaal*. I opened it and read what was inside.

"Leave the hotel at once and return to Hamburg by the next train. You must not be seen. My parents and uncle are here. I will come to the Melkstrasse to-night and explain. *Verdammtes Unglück*. Thy Caspar."

Inside the letter was a ten-mark note which was presumably meant for my return fare. It fluttered to the ground and my cheeks grew hot as Mr. Hope picked it up and gave it back to me. I was so angry that I did not know what to say or what to do. I should think a man who is struck in public must feel much as I did when I read that letter while Mr. Hope stood there and watched me. My mind was far from clear. Should I allow myself to be ignominiously bundled home at Caspar's expense or should I brave him, walk into the *Speisesaal*, speak to Herr Plessen, order lunch and sit down by myself to eat it? I was in a dilemma and I had myself to blame.

"Is anything wrong?" said Mr. Hope. "Can I help you?"

I made up my mind suddenly.

"When is there a train back to Hamburg?" I asked.

"There is just time to catch one," he said, looking at his watch. "I am going by it."

"So am I," I said, and walked out of the hotel with him.

arrived there, and I waited a moment for Caspar to appear. I thought it would be pleasanter to go into the *Speisesaal* in his company than alone. I could hear a great clatter on the other side of its doors and guessed at a crowd of people dining there. An elderly man whom I took to be the host came through once or twice with bottles of wine but he was too busy to stop and speak to me. I had just made up my mind to go in by myself and look for Caspar when the door opened and Mr. Hope came into the hall. He shook hands with me at once and asked me if I was staying in the hotel.

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He asked no questions. He showed no surprise. When we got to the station he took my ticket with his own and when the train came up he found an empty compartment and we traveled in it together. But my thoughts were on fire and the very kindness of his manner helped to trouble me. At first I tried to talk indifferently, but I was not mistress of myself enough yet to do that well.

"I think I shall go straight back to England," I said suddenly.

"I would if I were you," he said.

I liked him better than ever as I sat there opposite him, eating my heart out in loneliness and wishing he was an old friend instead of a new one. He was England at that hour when I wanted England, wanted her ways that were my ways, her speech that I understood, her honor that was my own. But had I done her credit? What was England thinking of me behind that steady manner and those quiet eyes.

"Have you a home waiting for you?" he asked me.

I told him that I had but that I had promised the Plessens to stay with them a year and wanted to keep my promise if I could.

"When will the year be up?"

"Not till next May. I've only been in Germany four months."

He did not repeat his advice or say a further word that could encourage me to confide in him; and I should have been ashamed to do so. My intimate personal griefs were not his concern and he could not help them. I hardly understood then how much he did help by being himself and taking me back to England where by right of birth and breeding I belonged.

"Sometimes I get homesick," I admitted.

"So do I," he said. "I'm going back next year."

I stared out of the window and battled with myself for self-control. I hardly know how to describe my condition to you because it was so vehement and so confused. I was angry, hurt, disappointed, enlightened, miserable. I had been treated insolently and the sting lay in the thought that I had myself to blame. I was too furious for sorrow, too much offended for heartache. When I thought of the morning I raged, and when I pictured the morrow I believed that I should know what to do and say. At the moment I hardly knew whether I wanted to laugh or cry, and to my intense humiliation in the midst of a profound silence I began to do both. At first Mr. Hope looked discreetly out of the window and said nothing. In fact, I spoke first and tried to apologize.

"I'm rather run down," I explained. "I must get some quinine to-morrow."

"I should go to England to-morrow if I were you," he said unexpectedly.

I was so surprised by the decision with which he spoke that I stopped crying and looked at him.

"You are not old enough or . . . experienced enough to be knocking about Hamburg without anyone to look after you," he went on. "I hate to see it."

"I'm nearly twenty-one. I ought to be old enough to take care of myself."

"Promise me that you will go straight home," he said.

"But there is no need. I assure you that I can take care of myself."

"A moment ago you talked of going."

He did not look satisfied and he certainly did not look indifferent, but I could not add anything to what I had told him. After all we were strangers.

"I am going to England in a few days," he said, "and then I am going to India for six months. I expect to be back in Hamburg in May or June."

That is all that passed between us, at least all that can be written down. What happened to me in this second encounter with Mr. Hope has happened over and over again to men and women. How can I say it? I was in love with Caspar. There is no denying that. I was smarting with the indignity he had put on me. And at the very height of the angry memory and humiliation that consumed me chance threw me into the company of a man whose boots the German was not good enough to black. He was not for me, but I could take his measure. I thought of stories where a girl of the working class loves a gentleman, but marries one of her own kind. There was no difference of class between Mr. Hope and me, but he had age, sex and circumstances in his favor; and character. I knew he must think badly of me and I wished him to think well. But the probability was that we should never meet again.

Our ways parted when we left the train, and he bid me good-by with impassive politeness. I watched him get into a taxi while I waited for my tram to start. He had seen me into it before he went himself, and two young women opposite me had stared at him and at me curiously.

"A giant," said one watching him depart. "Such an English giant."

"I like them not," said the other gloomily. "I like

not men who remind me of pine trees. One could not become attached to a pine tree."

The other sighed.

"But this one was handsome, Marikka," she said. "That one must love him. He was handsome."

"So is a pine tree," said the other. "But I do not wish to put my arms around one. There was no expression in his face when he bid his sweetheart good-by."

"How do you know that she is his sweetheart?" whispered the other with a stealthy glance at me.

"By her eyes as she looked after him," said the other, and took my breath away.

I certainly had been sorry to see my countryman go, but I had not thought I showed it plainly. When I reached home the first thing I did was to put a ten-mark note in an envelope, address it to Herr Caspar Heiling and post it. Then I found Frau Bach in her lair and told her that I was tired and would not see anyone who called that evening.

"Who should call?" she asked suspiciously.

"Only one might," I pointed out.

"The Fräulein told me a week ago that she had not a friend in Hamburg. When one has no friends one has no callers. That is what I said to myself when I saw the roses which must have cost ten marks at least. I said to myself the Fräulein is highly respectable and a teacher and she has no friends in Hamburg. Why then does she receive expensive flowers and go out at night and be away the whole of Sunday in a dress of white lace . . ."

"Muslin," I interrupted, "embroidered muslin."

"Lace!" persisted the old woman who had followed

quite borne out by the anxiety in his eyes he drew the nearest chair close to mine, sat down and tried to seize one of my hands. But I had had enough of that.

"You are angry with me," he said.

"I am so angry that I cannot talk about it. I have only one thing to say. Be good enough to go and not to come back. I will not have you calling here."

"But where can we meet?"

"We shall meet every day before long at your uncle's house."

"What is the good of that? Besides I cannot wait. Long before my aunt comes back we shall have made up our minds. The present situation is impossible."

"Quite impossible. Therefore I end it. Good-night!"

I got up and found to my vexation that I was trembling rather violently. I hoped he did not see it and that I did not look as undignified as I felt. He seemed a good deal disturbed himself and made those inarticulate sounds of surprise and impatience that convey so much and are so difficult to answer.

"What could I do?" he began. "What would you have had me do? Confess to my parents and my uncle that we were spending the day together at Grünbeck? Appear before them in your company!"

"I admit that I ought not to have gone," I said stiffly. "I blame myself more than you. In fact, I do not blame you at all. No doubt you acted according to your lights."

"What do you mean? You stand there looking as proud as Lucifer. You know I'm crazy for you. You know I want you."

He took a step towards me and I saw that he really was in a crazy mood which somehow or other I had better quell. I pointed to the communicating door between my room and the next.

"I wish you would take care what you say and speak in a lower voice," I said. "Probably the man who let you in is at the key-hole."

He swore under his breath and glowered at me.

"Come away from this garret then," he muttered. "Come and dine somewhere and after dinner . . ."

I shook my head.

"You are a coquette," he cried, striking one hand with the other. "You lure a man on and then . . . what is it that you want? I swear that a few hours ago you were willing. If I had not been a fool . . . come with me now . . ."

He spoke harshly and in a tone of command, but that only stiffened me.

"You should try to understand," I counseled him. "Everything is at an end between us. We have both made a mistake."

"*Unsinn* . . . nonsense! I have made no mistake. I am colossally in love with you . . ."

"Oh! don't be silly," I said, and sat down. "Colossally! That's about the right word for it."

"You are in an impossible mood," he growled. "I had better go."

"Good-night!" I said and bowed him out of the door. When he had departed the strength seemed to go from me, I hardly know why. I sat down again beside the window and stayed there till the darkness came, thinking over the day's doings. I was not proud of the part I had played.

XXI

ALL that night and most of the next day I was in two minds what to do. If I went straight back to England I should simplify my own affairs but I should be causing some inconvenience to the Plessens. They had certainly not consulted my convenience lately, but then they had not known that my solitary life was turning out a failure. I had written to Frau Plessen once or twice but I had not told her that. Besides I had covenanted with the Plessens and with Aunt Susan for a year in Germany and I wanted to see the year out and take the rough with the smooth. Twice I had said I would go back to England and each time the moment the words were out of my mouth I had known I should not act on them. The easiest way is not always the way one elects to take.

I had looked forward to the winter in Hamburg. The children had told me of skating on the Alster and of the celebrations at Christmas and New Year. Aunt Susan had said in her last letter that if I stayed on she might shut up the house in Chelsea and spend some months in Rome. I must make up my mind one way or the other and make it up quickly. Frau Plessen would want to know. Aunt Susan would want to know. I wrestled with myself and got no further. All my searchings of the heart played round a central

figure and my choice would have been unperplexed if I had known better what Caspar would do. Was that episode closed, leaving me sore and disappointed, but with a reserve of pride on which I could depend? Or would he try to batter my reserve down and by being aflame himself set me on fire again? Could I withstand him? In one sense, of course, I could. The idea of a marriage that was not a marriage; of a temporary union called by some fine name and ending at the man's pleasure or at mine never frightened or allured me. Our love did not reach the heights of such tragedy or sink to such baseness. I was neither a heroine nor an adventuress, but an every-day young woman brought up with every-day ideas of right and wrong. Perhaps they tended to make life dull but I could not get rid of them on that account. *On fait ce qu'on peut*, and I was never even tempted. The suspicion that Caspar had wished to offer me his left hand, but not his right fermented in my mind with destructive force. I was in no danger with a man who had covertly insulted me. When my wrath had spent itself I should laugh at him. At least I hoped so. The real difficulty lay in the reality of his attachment. I did not know him well enough to know whether it would survive denial.

I still felt uncertain what to do when the decision was taken out of my hands by one of those common but upsetting events that alter the procedure of life at a moment's notice. Herr Plessen arrived at the Melkstrasse that afternoon and I saw at a glance that something untoward had happened. After greeting me politely and taking the easy chair near the window he said:

"Are you nervous?"

I wondered what he meant. When he came in I thought at first that he had heard of my being at Grünbeck with Caspar yesterday and that there was going to be what Germans call *Krach* and what we call the devil to pay, but I knew in a moment that his was as well disposed as usual towards me and that his trouble was his own.

"Are you nervous," he repeated, "nervous about infection?"

"Not more than other people."

"Have you had scarlet?"

"Scarlet fever? I don't think so."

He looked at me in his ruminating way that always reminded me of a cow chewing the cud.

"How is it that you only think and do not know?" he said. "One should know such things about oneself."

"One should," I agreed. "I can ask Aunt Susan."

"It would take some hours," he objected, looking worried. "Even by telegram it would take some hours, and the children have no one with them."

"What?" I cried. "The children . . ."

"Not all of them. Only Arthur and Trudi. They arrived at midday. Their mother sent them home. She was afraid it might be measles, but Dr. Jastrow says it is scarlet which is far worse."

"But was the flat ready for them?"

"My wife had telegraphed to the girls and they had got a room ready, but when they heard that it was scarlet Sophie sat down and howled and Marie ran out of the house. So I locked the children in and came here."

"It was the best thing to do. Have you a taxi waiting?"

He looked immensely relieved.

"You will come?" he said. "You are not afraid?"

I had opened my little trunk and was shoveling my few possessions into it at top speed. One of them was the crumpled white lawn dress I had worn yesterday. A sprig of heather was still pinned near the waist. I left it there.

"Will Frau Plessen come?" I asked. "Have you let her know about Marie?"

"She knows. She will not come. She has never had scarlet and says that for the sake of the other children it would not be right to run any risks. She is always in the highest degree nervous about infection."

He sighed heavily and I continued to open drawers, empty them and shut them again. I had packed my books first.

"It is a terrible business," he said. "For months no one will be able to come near us . . ."

"Months! You mean weeks."

"Months. First the illness must run its course and then the children must be segregated for six weeks. After that the room has to be papered and painted, the bedding has to be disinfected . . . my head goes round when I think of all there is to be done. The doctor wants a sheet dipped in carbolic and hung at the door. How am I to know which sheet my wife would use for such a purpose? I shall probably take her best one and hear of it to the end of my life. And there are no nails over our doors from which one can hang sheets. Besides the very idea of nails in

respectable Herr Lehrer had complained only this morning that I was talking late last night with a gentleman. As she had been out she did not know who the gentleman was and he had apparently refused to give his name. . . .

Herr Plessen came into the midst of it followed by the taxi man whom he had persuaded to fetch my trunk. When Frau Bach saw him she retreated to the furthest corner of the room and held out her arms as if to keep him off.

"What ails her?" said Herr Plessen in English.

"She is afraid of infection and she is furious with me because I will not pay twenty marks for hot water."

"For hot water! What hot water?"

"She has brought me some every day to wash with."

"In a large can?"

"In a little jug. I've paid her three marks."

"Never have I paid for such a thing," said Herr Plessen.

"I thought perhaps it was the German custom," I began.

"To ask twenty marks for hot water? It is an impudence. Simply an impudence!"

He said that in German and addressed himself to Frau Bach. She looked at me with venom in her bleared old eyes.

"When a beautiful young lady receives visits from rich gentlemen," she began in a sickly tone that gave me nausea, "rich gentlemen who can send roses at this season of the year . . ."

"What is she muttering about?" said Herr Plessen,

and turning to her sternly he said: "Shut thy mouth. Know you not that the young lady is English?"

"An accursed race!" she whined. "An accursed race! Do I not read it in the *Nachrichten* when the Herr Lehrer throws it away? Often I read it and it is true. Stands she there as if the world belonged to her, and what is she? One who comes here as she says to study and lead a quiet life. One who has no friend and must be coddled with tea at all hours, and hot water and I know not what. But gentlemen she knows, both young and old it seems. I like it not. If the children have scarlet their mother should be with them. Where then is their mother? Does the *Gnädige Frau* know that you leave my house and go bag and baggage with the *Herr Gemahl*? What am I to believe?"

We fled before her tongue and got into the taxi.

"Such women should be drowned," said Herr Plessen. "She is what you call a shrew."

"Oh! worse!" I cried. "A virago! I never came across anyone like her before."

XXII

HERR PLESSEN did not approve of my saying that I had never met anyone like Frau Bach because he thought it cast a slur on Germany.

"In England also there are women who scold," he said.

"No doubt."

"One reads of them in Shakespeare."

"And in Chaucer."

"Chaucer! I do not know. One has not time for everything. But that was an evil old woman. Why did you go there?"

"She is Marie's aunt."

"Is that a reason? So do all women argue. They have no logical sense. I remember now. My wife told me you were with people she knew. I thought she meant a decent burgherly household where you would have been well looked after."

"Are the children very bad?" I asked. "How is it they were allowed to travel with the fever on them?"

He shrugged his shoulders and explained that his wife was staying in a country place where there was only a village doctor and that she had bundled the children home without consulting him. The journey did not seem to have harmed them, and if you are to

have scarlet it is better to be in Hamburg than in the wilds."

"With children there is always something," he said philosophically, and then he added: "I shall come every day on my way to business to see how things go and what you require; and in Dr. Jastrow you can have confidence. He is an excellent doctor."

So I was to be by myself in that large flat with Sophie who howled and two children who were ill; and I was to nurse them both through scarlet fever, and afterwards to keep them company while they "peeled"—perhaps get the fever myself. I looked through the windows at the busy sunny streets and reflected that Christmas would be coming before we were all at large again. It seemed a lifetime since yesterday morning when I had sat by the waters of Grünbeck with Caspar and listened to his blandishments. The realities of life confronted me now: sickness, solitude again, responsibility and hard work. I could not turn my back on them.

"Someone must nurse the children," I said.

"Certainly!" said Herr Plessen. "When children are ill they must be nursed. It is as I say. Children make much work. But if there were no children there would be no men and women and if there were no men and women . . ."

"Would it matter?"

"It is unthinkable. Besides, the children are there."

"I suppose that if I did not nurse them you would hire a trained nurse."

"But you have said that you would nurse them. For what other purpose have you left that evil woman

and come with me? You will be quite comfortable. Sophie will assist you and cook for you. I shall provide you with money for housekeeping. Dr. Jastrow will give you exact instructions about everything. He is coming again at five to see you."

By that time we were at the house and getting out of the taxi. The thought of Trudi and Arthur locked into a room when they were ill and feverish winged my feet and without further argument I hurried upstairs to them. When they saw me they both opened their heavy eyes and in a voice of deep contentment said "Sallee!"

"Sallee is here."

"My throat hurts me," said Trudi.

"My head aches frightfully," said Arthur.

"We are thirsty and there is nothing to drink."

"The sun is in our eyes and our eyes are hot and painful."

"I should like some Cologne water."

"I want my new knife."

"*Aber Kinder!*" said the father who stood well outside the door. "Let Miss Danvers take off her hat and arrange herself. Afterwards she will attend to you."

I was glad I had come when I saw how much I was wanted and could do. The doctor was efficient and pedantic, but he did not seem to care about the children's comfort or want to relieve their pains and aches except by the way as symptoms of the disease that must be combated. When he examined them he was rough, and if they shrank from him he was impatient. We dreaded his daily visit. As for Sophie

she ceased to howl soon after I arrived, but she stolidly refused to enter the children's room.

"Illnesses are for rich people," she said. "I am a poor girl and have my living to earn."

"But you say you have had scarlet."

"One can have a bad thing twice over. It is good fortune that does not repeat itself. Let those who can pay doctors and chemists have illnesses."

"But you have your insurance and Herr Plessen . . ."

"I have not run away like that Marie. No one can say that I have run away. I hope it will be remembered at Christmas. But *Herrschaften* have short memories. What the likes of us do for them is never enough, but what they do for us . . . *dass Gott erbarm*. One must battle through life as best one can. Illnesses I do not want. A mother should nurse her children and not expect strangers to do it. A raven mother I call one who stays away from her children when they are ill."

"It is a question of arithmetic," I said. "Better two people with scarlet than five."

"Motherly love is not a question of arithmetic," said Sophie stoutly.

"Of reasoning then."

"When one loves one does not reason. A child knows that."

I had occasion to remember this dictum a few days later when Sophie was out on some errand and I had to answer the door. There, his hands full of parcels, stood Caspar, and before I could stop him he had shut the door, put down the parcels and nearly had me in

"I, afraid! Surely it was you at Grünbeck who could not face the music."

He walked up and down the room again.

"You don't understand," he said. "I'm dependent on my father. Instead of making me partner he could turn me out of the business if I displeased him."

"Then don't displease him." /

"It would be foolish in the highest degree. In fact it would spell ruin."

"I think I hear the children," I said, opening the door. "I must go."

"When can I see you? When will Sophie be out again?"

"I don't know."

"She will probably go out on Sunday."

I would not tell him. I slipped into the hall and was on the way to the children's room when he came after me with his parcels.

"Give them to Arthur and Trudi with my greetings," he said. "Tell them to get well quickly. On the hall table there is something for you."

With that he was gone before I could either thank him for what he had brought the children or inform him that I would not accept his presents. But as he fled he stole a kiss so quickly and so unexpectedly that I found nothing to say.

XXIII

HOW much easier it would be to write about people if they were either bad or good and not the usual blend. To this day I have a soft spot in my heart for Caspar. I may write him down a bad hat, or, as Aunt Susan would have said, "a young man without any principles, my dear," but I remember him debonair, in love with me, full of energy and good spirits and, unlike most Germans, generous. His little cousins adored him and the picture books he had sent them hardly consoled them for his omission to pay them a bedside visit. The doctor would not allow it, I explained.

"I have heard Caspar call Dr. Jastrow an old donkey," said Arthur. "One does not obey the orders of old donkeys."

"We do," I reminded them and administered their medicine.

"What did Caspar bring for you?" said Trudi.

I pretended not to hear and put away the medicine.

"When he went away he spoke loudly," said Arthur.

"We heard him say there was something for you on the hall table."

"Fetch it in here," said Trudi.

I sat down and looked at the little devils. They could twist me round their fingers and knew it. They were sitting up in bed and wore blue flannel jackets over their nighties. Their hair was rumped and their

blue eyes solemn. What one asked for the other instantly wanted and in my own kingdom I reigned over two conspirators.

"If we do not see what Caspar has brought you we shall become excited," said Arthur, "and I heard the old donkey say that we were not under any circumstances to be excited."

"You are not to call Dr. Jastrow an old donkey," I said.

"We shall have fever if we become excited," said Trudi.

"Then keep calm," I advised them.

"We cannot be calm until we know what Caspar has brought you. Suppose it was chocolate?"

"Suppose it was?"

"One shares chocolate with one's friends."

"I have a frightful yearning for chocolate," said Arthur.

"I too!" sighed Trudi and gazed at me reproachfully.

"It may not be chocolate. It is probably a book that neither of you would understand."

"But one looks at a present. At least one looks," urged Arthur.

"Not to look is direct ungrateful," said Trudi.

"I'll get it," said Arthur, and was out of bed like a flash of lightning with me after him, but, alas, laughing too. "I'm afraid you are lacking in proper control of the children," wrote Aunt Susan. She was not afraid of my letters, so I sent her long ones at this time, written at night in the dining-room after my patients were asleep. "Someone had brought me a box of chocolate," I told her, and she, being a shrewd woman, asked who the someone was. "A

cousin of the children's," I answered, and blessed my native tongue, for its indifference to genders. In German you cannot mention a cousin without mentioning a he or a she. I was telling Aunt Susan everything about my life in Hamburg except the one and only thing that tangled it. Even if there had been no tangle but a smooth every-day courtship I could not have written about Caspar, while it hung fire. I might have spoken to Isabella if she had been in reach but never to Aunt Susan. We were shy with each other as different generations often are. Besides I knew she would not like the idea of my marrying a German and living in Germany, so why put it into her head when it might never come to pass.

The special providence that invariably sends people where they are least wanted sent Herr Plessen to ask after his children at the very moment when one of them was in the hall struggling with me for the possession of a large package wrapped in a smart floral paper and tied with silver string.

"Chocolates!" yelled Arthur, and while I scolded and Trudi screamed to us to be quick the key turned quickly in the latch and the head of the house appeared.

"What is up?" he asked and as I turned to meet him Arthur, hugging my box of chocolates, tore back to bed.

"Arthur is feeling much better to-day," I began.

"So it seems," said Herr Plessen, "but had he your permission to be out of bed and in this cold passage?"

"See, Father!" cried Trudi from the bedroom. "See what Caspar has brought to-day. Books for us and an enormous box of chocolates for Sallee."

Herr Plessen saw. He never went inside the chil-

dren's room, but every day he stood at the open door for a few minutes and conversed with them.

"How is it you were in the hall and not in bed when I arrived?" he said severely to Arthur.

"Sallee would not look at her present from Caspar," the boy said repeating himself. "When one becomes a present at least one looks at it."

"In moderation chocolate is wholesome," said Trudi.

"We will send messages to Caspar since we may not write to him," said Arthur.

"Sallee can write to him," said Trudi.

"You had better send messages," I counseled.

Herr Plessen had looked at the children and the chocolates and now he looked at me.

"Has my nephew been here before to-day?" he asked.

"No!" I said.

"Greet Caspar from us," said the children, both speaking at once. "Greet him lovingly and thank him a thousand times for the books and the chocolate."

"But the chocolate is not meant for you at all," said Herr Plessen. "Children who are ill in bed are not allowed to eat bonbons."

"Consider the size of the box," said Trudi. "If Sallee ate all those she would be sick."

"You have only to ask Caspar," said Arthur judicially. "He will tell you for whom he meant them."

Herr Plessen gave one of those little grunts that meet an awkward situation more easily than the exact phrase: he told Arthur that if he dared to leave his bed without permission again he would be sent to a hospital where no such pranks were allowed; and he

charged me not to let the children spoil their stomachs with sweets and to exercise my authority if they were troublesome.

"They are as good as gold," I said.

He gave his little grunt again, his eyes twinkling at me as he shook hands and then he went away. I wondered whether he would say anything about the chocolates to his nephew, and what he would say.

I could not go out on Sunday because Sophie, who worked like a black for us all the week, wanted her half day of escape then and I had not the heart to ask her to give it up or to exchange. On a Sunday she met her *Schatz*, sat in a *Bier-Halle* or went to a dancing hall with him and presumably came back strengthened and refreshed for the week's labor. I used to see her leave the house dressed to the nines in a tartan skirt, a shiny black cloth coat and a saucy fur cap that sat with a grotesque effect on her weather-beaten face and skimpy hair. But she always seemed satisfied with herself and with her prospects. I have often wondered since what has become of her and whether her *Schatz* is still alive. But she told me once in her comfortable Mecklenburg voice that if he failed her she could find someone to take his place because she had saved enough to furnish a house handsomely; a home of two rooms and a kitchen, one of the rooms being a "best" one with a plush suite, a carpet in front of the sofa and a clock. Her ambitions were clear and limited and she had nearly attained them. I did not exactly envy her but I know she pitied me.

"Fräulein is too pretty to be an old maid," she said. "What a pity that she has no money. Without money

it is difficult for a girl to marry and in the better classes so much is required: more than any girl can earn for herself."

I never invited these comments on my personal affairs or encouraged them; but Sophie said what came into her head and took silence for agreement.

"The children have told me that the young Herr was here yesterday and brought you chocolates," she said. "Such a butterfly."

"How can the children tell you anything when you are afraid to go into their room?" I asked.

"While the Fräulein was out to-day we talked. I set their door open and remained at the other end of the passage. It was quite safe."

"To-day for dinner we can have mutton," I observed.

"Such a butterfly. From one to the other he goes. All Hamburg knows it. It is time he ranged himself."

"Mutton with potatoes. Irish stew. The children like it."

"He goes with rich people and he will be rich himself. Such people look for money with their wives."

"Herr Heiling's marriage is not our concern, Sophie. At the present moment I am thinking strongly of pancakes. You make such heavenly pancakes and with preserved cranberries . . ."

Sophie nodded her head, pleased with my approval of her cooking, but determined to strike her warning note.

"Chocolates are not serious," she said. "You are a foreigner here and in England it may be otherwise."

With us chocolates say nothing. A little attention perhaps but nothing more."

"It is just the same in England," I assured her. "A girl who allowed her head to be turned by chocolates would prove that she had no head."

"But if you had no head it could not be turned," argued Sophie stolidly. "Besides, I have yet to see a human being without a head. Fräulein has only a small one, but it is there and perhaps can be more easily turned than a head of a larger size."

I wanted to tell her that my head, though small, was screwed on the right way, but to say so in German was still beyond me. Besides I really could not discuss my matrimonial chances with Sophie, much as I liked her and fashionable as it is to be democratic. You may make the same laws for rich and poor, with a bias towards the poor; but you will never make the Aunt Susans and the Sophies of the world talk the same talk or look at life from each other's eyes. No doubt Sophie meant well towards me; but the only thing that could have sanctioned intimate discussion between us would have been affection. We were far from feeling that for one another although we were on good terms.

"We have talked with Sophie," the children told me directly I went in to them. "She opened our door and then ran quickly to the end of the passage. She is very frightful of scarlet. Next time Cousin Caspar comes we will talk with him. You can bring him a chair from the dining-room."

"Oh! Can I?" I said, but I thought it was a good idea. If he came he should sit in full view of his cousins and behave himself.

XXIV

SUNDAY came, Sophie went out and I was left alone with the children. It had turned bitterly cold, there was talk of the Alster being frozen and I had had the dining-room stove lighted so that I could set the door open and warm the passage. Modern German houses have central heating and a constant supply of hot water. I discovered that later on when I went to see the Crefelds. But the house in which the Plessens lived had been built by Herr Plessen's grandfather after the great fire in 1842 and had no latter-day improvements except electric lights. Herr Plessen remembered stories his grandparents told of the great fire and said that to the end of her life his grandmother could not speak of it without shuddering; and he still used a quaint old toilet glass that had been saved from her burning house. She herself had been driven out of it by soldiers, for she had run back at the risk of her life to get her canary. Arthur and Trudi belonged to the fourth generation after the fire, but they still talked of it and told tales of it much as I suppose English children may have done in 1742 about the fire of 1666. They were full of talk, too, about the skating on the Alster and the crowded life on the ice when the steamboats could not run and you took your walks on the water instead of on land. I heard them having a heated discussion as to whether you could say you walked on water when the water

was frozen, but I did not join in, because I was stoking the dining-room stove and according to their suggestion putting one or two chairs in the hall.

"Too clever by half" is a vulgar expression I dare say, but how I should get on without vulgar expressions I do not know. Aunt Susan did, so I suppose I belong to a vulgar generation. I don't really think so. I just say so to placate pedants. My real faith is in any phrase that conveys my meaning vividly whether it comes from Oxford or a darkie's cabin. "Too clever by half" exactly describes my procedure that Sunday afternoon when I knew Caspar would arrive and made my preparations to receive him. I could not keep him out, but I could set chairs and a tea table in the passage in full view of the children who watched and applauded me; but showed an embarrassing curiosity.

"Who then is coming, Sallee?" asked Trudi.

"Wait and see," I said.

"Perhaps it will be Caspar," said Arthur. "Sallee has made herself beautiful."

"Don't talk nonsense, Arthur," I said from the passage. "Every Sunday, as you know, I wear this frock."

"She becomes red," said Trudi. "Have you observed that, Arthur? When one speaks of our cousin Caspar, Sallee becomes red; as red as a rose. She has a lovely color."

"I have always told you that Sallee was a beautiful girl," said Arthur with a man of the world air. "I regret that by the time I shall be old enough to marry she will be too old for me."

"Children, I will not have this talk," I said dashing across the passage to their room.

"What talk?" said they with ingenuous surprise.

"Talk of marriage and getting red and such things. You know I will not have it."

"I suppose that is what Tante Auguste means when she says all English people are hypocrites," said Arthur. "We Germans speak what is in our minds."

I could not very well speak my mind about Tante Auguste, otherwise Fräulein Popper, just then, so I fetched the tea things and put the kettle on a gas ring in the freezing cold kitchen. One of my minor disappointments had been the afternoon meal at the Plessens, which was neither the delicious coffee and cake described in books about Germany nor our own comfortable afternoon tea. They usually had tea that looked like toast water and tasted of straw; and a peculiarly uneatable brand of cheap vanilla biscuits which Tante Auguste had informed me (quite unnecessarily) were made in Germany.

"We consider them equal to the best English biscuits," she had added, and of course that silly little Trudi had told her I did not like them. However, to-day we had a fresh *Kaffee kuchen* baked as a surprise for the children; for they were nearly well again but not allowed up yet by Dr. Jastrow and of course still with weeks of segregation before them. They were in the highest spirits about it, though, until the doctor had said that they might soon do lessons again provided they used no books or burnt those they used. That dashed them for a time but not for long, because they agreed that lessons with me were not lessons at all; a two-edged tribute that I might take as I pleased.

We usually had tea at five, but it was hardly

half past four when the children caught sight of the cake and said they both felt weak with hunger and would like some at once.

"After the dinner you both ate you wouldn't be weak with hunger if you waited till to-morrow morning," I said, and sat down for a moment on one of the chairs near the front door. From there I could see in a diagonal direction into the children's room and we could talk to each other without raising our voices as much as they were used to do at all times.

"Dr. Jastrow told you that it was important to keep up our strength," said Arthur.

Before I could answer, the door-bell rang so suddenly and shrilly that I jumped. The children jumped too, with mischief and excitement.

"Caspar! Caspar!" they shouted as I opened the door and they craned forward in their beds to see him.

I now want a fine poetical simile to describe the moment of dead silence that ensued when, instead of Caspar, we saw Miss Campbell on the door mat. I'm half afraid that the silence was first broken by Arthur saying *Pfui* in a whisper to Trudi; but I hope Miss Campbell did not hear him. She wore a cheap looking fur coat which she told me later was worth a fortune and had belonged to a Russian princess who had sold it to her for a tenth of its value; and the nipping cold, in spite of her furs, had seized on her prominent nose and turned it to a crimson that went deeper and deeper still in the warm air of the hall. It is an affliction to have a large nose that behaves like that and I felt sorry for her. But I believe I wasted my pity. Her manner was as arrogant as ever as she stood outside, and when I told her about the scarlet

fever she came into the passage and said she was not afraid of it because she had had it herself and so had Gisela. She inquired closely into our doctor's treatment and mode of disinfection, disapproved of both and peering at the children through her glasses and her veil said that they had probably not had scarlet fever at all. Since she was not afraid I asked her to have tea with us, and she said that she had come with that intention, as she thought I must be thirsting for a little intercourse with a reasonable grown-up person. She had heard of my incarceration and pitied me from the bottom of her heart. The constant companionship of children was both tedious and wearing. She did not lower her high-pitched voice to say all this and the children knew enough English by this time to follow it with rising indignation.

"Sallee has it good by us," sang out Arthur in his queer jargon. "All night we sleep, and all day we play together."

"Why do you come here and hetz Sallee?" asked Trudi, her eyes, as I could see, threatening tears.

"We also have it good," said Arthur. "We choose our own dinners and Sophie cooks them."

"And our cousin Caspar comes with books for us and chocolates for Sallee," said Trudi. "You need not have pity with Sallee. She likes me better than Gisela; such a little Jewess."

"Trudi!" I cried and sprang to my feet, thinking to create a sudden diversion. I had seen Miss Campbell prick up her ears at Caspar's name and before the look of attention, chagrin and surprise had subsided the door bell rang again.

"But you expect someone?" she said, and her eye

lighted on the tea tray, where I had put four cups and four plates. I was saved from answering by having to open the door.

"Well, children! how goes it?" said Caspar, walking in, as if he felt quite at home. But he checked himself when he saw Miss Campbell and my tea-table.

"You have visitors," he said, and allowed himself to be presented.

I left them to make each other's acquaintance and fled into the kitchen to brew the tea and get another cup and plate. We had quite a cheery time after I got back. I went to and fro between my guests and my patients: the children chattered; Sophie's cake was heavily punished by five of us, all hungry; and Miss Campbell found that Herr Heiling had spent a year in Paris and knew the fashionable street in which her married sister lived. He nearly knew the sister you might say, for he had been to a party on the *étage* below where a baron and baroness lived with whom the Wolffs were on speaking terms. She observed that the world was a small one and that she was only in Hamburg herself because she had an original and independent mind that likes to leave the beaten track. Caspar turned his eyes discreetly from her nose which the warmth of the flat and a full meal affected distressingly and presently got up. He leaned against the door of the children's room and had a merry argument with them about Max and Moritz. I knew from the way he stood and the way he glanced impatiently at us once or twice that he meant to outstay Miss Campbell. But she was equally determined and either dense or designedly disobliging. Perhaps it did

not accord with her ideas of propriety to leave him behind with me. Perhaps she thought she had impressed him and that he would accord her his attention again. At any rate she stayed, and stayed. Stayed like bad luck. The darkness had come long since and the lights we needed were turned on. She helped me to draw curtains. She helped me to carry away the tea-things. She stayed by me while I washed them, but expressed her surprise that I should demean myself by doing a servant's work.

"Sophie would have more respect for you if she found them unwashed," she assured me. "When Gisela was ill I would not even wash her medicine glass. I told Frau Crefeld when I went there that I must be waited on hand and foot as I had been accustomed. Otherwise . . ."

Her voice was shrill with exhortation. How I wished she would go and how little I liked her.

"I shall soon come and see you again," she said, keeping close to me as we returned to the hall; so close that her face nearly touched mine and more than once I had to draw back from it. "When am I likely to find you alone?"

"I'm never alone now that the children are ill," I said.

"The children do not matter. We can shut their door for an hour if we want a little quiet."

"You don't know the children . . ."

"Oh! of course I can see how you spoil them. You have allowed yourself to be their slave. That is because you are so inexperienced. I should like to give you my ideas. I am always ready to help persons who

seem rather young and helpless. Does Herr Heiling come every day?"

"Certainly not. Herr Plessen comes but he does not stay long."

At that moment Herr Heiling marched past us looking so thunderously angry that I felt embarrassed, for I thought Miss Campbell must surely guess that her prolonged visit was what had upset him.

"Good-night," he said to both of us inclusively and he shuffled into his fur-lined coat and slammed the door behind him.

"What a bear!" said Miss Campbell and sat down again.

She stayed to supper.

XXV

IF I had a nose like that I would not take it out in snow air," said Arthur viciously.

"I also not," said Trudi. "She spoilt our afternoon. Old witch!"

I pretended not to hear while I got the room ready for the night, but when they proceeded to make further remarks about Miss Campbell's nose and about her general disagreeableness I had to talk to them like a copy book.

"One must never criticise departing guests," I explained.

"Why not?"

"It is impolite and unkind."

They answered that they were only impolite and unkind to people who deserved it and they pointed out that they both behaved like little angels to me. They said that cousin Caspar agreed with them about Miss Campbell and had spoken of her as a *Teufelsweib* when she was in the kitchen and could not hear them; and he had asked them what time they settled down for the night, whether I stayed up later than they did and at what time Sophie came back to the flat.

So I was not surprised to hear the bell again about half past nine and to see Caspar when I opened the door. The children were fast asleep; Sophie had a key with her and might not be back till midnight; I

was established in the dining-room with "Egmont" and a dictionary. It was warm and quiet in there that night. I had drawn an easy chair near the stove and when Caspar followed me in he pulled one forward for himself.

"Very comfortable," he said as he sat down.

"Why have you come again?" I asked.

"You expected me?"

"More or less; from what the children said."

"Are you glad to see me?"

I was rather, though I knew that I ought not to be. I was angry with myself for finding that my self-respect was still at loggerheads with my senses and that in his presence I still felt his charm. I knew he was behaving badly and yet I had not whistled him to the winds as completely as I should have done. That was before me and I meant beyond all doubt to do it; but I hardly expected to find it easy.

"Suppose the children waked?" I said. "Or suppose your uncle called and found you here? Or suppose Sophie came back earlier than usual?"

"They need not know that I have been here more than five minutes."

"The children got hold of those chocolates and told their father about them."

He looked quite taken aback and annoyed.

"He has said nothing. My uncle is a sly fox. Not a word has he said. But why were you not more careful? Why did you allow it?"

"I am not going to be careful. If you bring things to me they will remain on the hall table for anyone to see."

"But why such nonsense?"

"I will not accept things from you."

"Then you are irreconcilable?"

"Quite."

He pulled his mustache and stared at me. I tried to gather myself together and have it out with him.

"What is it that you want?" he said.

"I've just told you. Nothing. Nothing at all."

"I'm not talking of chocolates," he said impatiently.

"Don't you understand?"

"I believe I do," I said. "I am not a child."

He seized at that.

"It is what I say. You are not a child. You are independent. You can please yourself."

"I can."

"Then . . . Sallee."

I put out both my hands to keep him off. I was not afraid. I was not even as angry as I should be to-day when I am a woman. I was more of a child than I knew at the time, but I tried to behave in a grown-up way.

"Let us talk plain English," I said. "What are you offering me?"

"Love. The most passionate love."

I looked at him pensively.

"You are making a mistake," I said. "I should have thought a man of the world like you would have known better."

He began to bristle at once. I knew he would.

"I suppose it is because I am a foreigner," I continued. "It is difficult, I know, to appreciate social differences in foreigners."

His face darkened and he muttered some long German swear word under his breath; one of those com-

pound ones that stretch across the page when written and look something like this:

Schockschwererbrettputztausendhimmelsacrament.

"I made a mistake too," I hastened to say. "These international relations present difficulties . . ."

He lost his temper completely at that and as the dining-room table was near us he emphasized what he said on it with his fist.

"I'm not a man a woman can play with," he told me. "I know more than you think. I have English relations in Manchester. They have told me what your girls are like . . . how they lead men on . . . what their virtue is worth . . . yes worth . . . in bare money."

Then I got angry, too. It was an undignified scene and I wish I could paint it in pleasanter colors. I got so angry that I could not speak for a moment and glared at him silently.

"*Ach!*" he said, recovering before I did. "Why do we always quarrel? Probably the Papendorffs lie . . ."

"I have no doubt of it," he said. "But I have been in England myself. I lived in a boarding-house in Kensington; a high-class one as you say."

"I don't say it; but never mind. Go on. What happened in your high-class boarding-house?"

"There were young ladies there . . . *ach!* such amiable young ladies. But I was on my guard. I had no wish to figure in your breach of promise court. I took care."

"Very sensible of you."

"But I was never over head and ears in love with any of them as I am with you. If it were not for

my parents, if I were really independent, I would make you an offer of marriage . . . Sallee."

"You would?"

"On my honor I would. But after all to a free adventurous spirit like yours, what is marriage?"

I looked at him mockingly. He was putting his foot into it and he seemed to think that he was coaxing me round. He came a little nearer and would have fiddled with one of my hands if I had let him, but I drew back.

"A civil contract. Some words mumbled by a priest. Why should the want of such things separate us?"

"Somehow they do," I said.

"With me they have no weight at all. I should look on you as my wife."

"For how long?"

"*Ach!* what has love to do with time? Perhaps as long as we live. I am offering you a serious position, Sallee. I know you are not a girl who would accept anything else, though I assure you that both in England and Germany there are thousands of girls who have quite other ideas. The old boundaries have gone. Women are freeing themselves."

"Freedom isn't license," I said.

He struck at my open book lying near him on the table.

"You read 'Egmont,'" he cried. "How can you read 'Egmont' and talk like a prude? If you loved me as Clärchen loved . . ."

"Are you proposing that you and I should play the parts of Egmont and Clärchen?"

"It would end differently. I shall not be be-

headed. You will not die. In these days Clärchen is as happy and prosperous as anyone else."

"Is she?"

"I give you my word. I can tell you of cases . . . I know cases . . . amongst my friends . . ."

"I have never heard of a single case amongst mine. It is impossible. It could not happen. If it did it would be a tragedy."

"Nevertheless if you loved me enough . . ."

"But I don't," I said boldly. "I've discovered that."

"What have you discovered?"

"That I don't love you enough. You offer me, as I understand you, ruin and disgrace . . ."

"*Ach!* Words!"

"No. Realities. I see them plainly; so plainly that I can see nothing else. So I'm not tempted. I'm not even grateful. On the contrary, I'm so angry that as you may hear it is affecting my voice . . . oh! Go . . . go . . . before . . ."

I had begun to speak calmly and judicially and when I began I expected to end on the same note. The way in which I was suddenly overwhelmed by wrath and agitation was a complete and humiliating surprise to me. I got up, meaning to leave the room and let him find his way out alone; but he stood between me and the door and if I was white with anger he was white too, and dangerous.

"You have made a fool of me," he cried. "I won't endure it."

Luckily I'm fleet-footed but so was he. For a moment I knew what it was to feel afraid, but I was more angry than afraid even when he came towards

me with his cat-like sideways gait, quickly and quietly. I hated the indignity of it and the absurdity, but I twisted my shoulder from his grasp before he had time to strengthen it and fled round the dining-room table with him after me. As I escaped through the door I banged it and he was so near that it banged on his hand instead of shutting properly. He gave a scream of pain, but I ran on into the children's room and locked myself in. Then I stood still and listened.

"Sallee!" he said a moment later. "Come out and talk to me."

"No!" I said.

"You've hurt my hand. I want you to bind it up."

"Get it done at the ambulance station."

"I want to reason with you."

"You'll wake the children in a moment."

"If I go now I go for good."

"I'm glad to hear it."

I heard swear words again and no sound yet of departing feet.

"I can't talk to you through a wooden door," he said pettishly.

"There is nothing more to say."

"It is *Krach* then?"

"Yes."

It was with relief first and dismay next that I heard the front doorbell ring again. I could think of no one but Sophie who, having forgotten her key, was returning earlier than usual so that I should let her in. But it was not Sophie. As I stood close to the door listening to every sound I heard Miss Campbell's high-pitched voice although I had not heard Caspar admit her. I knew directly what had happened be-

cause it had happened before. When he arrived he had shut the door very softly so as not to rouse the children and the hasp had not held. She had just walked in and found Caspar at my keyhole.

Schockschwererbrettpotztausendhimmelsacrament.

"Herr Heiling!" I heard her exclaim. "You here! I must apologize for returning at this late hour, but I think I left a glove . . . ach! there it is . . . a thousand thanks . . . but where is Miss Danvers?"

"I have not seen her," he said promptly. "I came as you did . . . because I had left something behind."

"But how did you get in, if one may ask?"

"As you did. I found the door open."

"But there are lights in the dining-room and it looks . . . really it looks . . . as if the children had been having a *charwari* . . . what a *Wilthschaft!* Perhaps I had better see if Miss Danvers is in her room."

To save her further trouble I opened the door.

XXVI

AUNT SUSAN had once told me that a celebrated scholar, who was also a man of the world, had laid it down as a rule of life never to explain and never to apologize. Anyone like me, inclined by nature to be garrulous and easily confused, can only remember such advice as a counsel of perfection and perhaps strive after it in the hour of need. I did so as I stood at my open bedroom door with the light turned on and the two children drowsily awake behind me. I said nothing.

"But here is Miss Danvers," cried Miss Campbell. "I thought you must be up still as all the lights are on. Did you know that the door of the flat was open?"

"No," I said.

"I let myself in, and Herr Heiling says that he let himself in the moment before. Very strange!"

"Did you want to see me?"

"I left a glove here. I came back for it and saw it at once on a chair. I am very glad I came back. Herr Heiling says that he also has forgotten something."

I looked at Herr Heiling and hoped my appearance was more composed than his. You could see that he was saying *Teufelsweib* to himself and that he felt furiously annoyed and disappointed. He was very pale. He bit his lips while she was speaking and when

she alluded to him he lost his temper completely and his head, too.

"You have come back to spy on us," he said, and delivered me as well as himself into her hands. She looked down her nose at the glove she was putting on, shrugged her shoulders and smiled disagreeably.

"One could not guess that Miss Danvers received visitors at this time of night," she said. "When I left her I went to see a friend who lives close by and as I missed my glove I thought I would come back for it."

"I tell you I had not seen Miss Danvers when you arrived," protested Herr Heiling, and looked to me for confirmation. But I did not give it.

"Strange!" murmured Miss Campbell again. "As I came up the stairs I heard sounds . . ."

No doubt she had heard sounds. She had heard me run into my room and slam the door, and before that she had probably heard Herr Heiling call out when he hurt his hand and then appeal to me to bind it up. He was still nursing one hand with other as if it pained him.

"I will not disturb you any longer," said Miss Campbell. "Good-by, Miss Danvers. Perhaps I need hardly say that in future . . ."

She did not finish, but disappeared as suddenly as she had arrived. I have often thought since that perhaps I ought to have made her stay behind while I dismissed Caspar and told him in her presence not to come again till his aunt was back. But I am not sure. I was not inclined to defend myself to her for my conduct was not her business and I should probably not have convinced her.

an orphan who had been brought up by her grandmother in the country. I wondered what she would be like for what the children said about her told me something, but not much. However, Christmas was nearly on us before she came. I had had a busy time getting the flat ready and wrestling with an incompetent maid engaged by Herr Plessen in Marie's place. Then Oscar, who had been staying with friends near his school since the holidays, came back to us and behaved, as Trudi said, like a fox in a hen-yard. He had become rough and unruly and had forgotten all the English I had taught him. He said it was unnecessary for any German to learn English because Germans were shortly going to conquer the world and that everyone would then have to speak German. Also he was a boy and considered it beneath his dignity to take orders from a woman. I let him feel the rough edge of my tongue and sent him quietly to Coventry till he came round, and he very soon did. He knew that his father and mother would support me if I appealed to them, but of course I was not going to do that if I could help it. I think he was impressed when he found I told no tales. The three children all told tales of each other and were puzzled and surprised when I would not listen to them. It was Oscar who over-wound my watch one day and broke the mainspring, but it was Trudi who told me of it and Arthur who told his father. I could not break them of the habit though I tried.

"Oscar did spoil your watch," said Trudi. "I saw it in his hand . . . so wicked has he become."

"He should have owned up himself," I explained.

"Not such a fool," growled Oscar, who felt sore

in spirit and in body for his father had chastised him with thoroughness and taken his pocket money to have the watch repaired. "You would have done as Arthur did and you I cannot beat. But next time I get Arthur alone . . ."

"In that case I shall tell Papa again," said Arthur.

I was glad when Frau Plessen came back, bearing the reins of authority in her capable hands and seeing even as she entered the door what was wrong in the passage. Behind her came Elsa Mieding and then Herr Plessen and the boys who had gone to the station to meet the travelers. While I shook hands with Frau Plessen I had a swift first impression of her niece who had golden hair and cheeks like apples. I had made a picture to myself of a slender simple creature, a fairy-like figure, lovely to look at, rather silent perhaps, adorable. So I was disappointed. The golden hair and the rosy cheeks were well enough, but they went with one of those unfortunate figures so common in Germany: a figure that contrives to be both thick and angular, narrow in the chest, high-shouldered, large boned and broad across the hips. She resembled her aunt in build and had the same wide mouth and handsome teeth that showed too much gum when she talked and smiled. And before I knew her five minutes I knew that she was going to talk and smile a great deal. She stared hard at me when I was presented to her but after that ignored me while she made much of the children and said it was heavenly to be in Hamburg again. She decided that Arthur and Trudi had grown while they were ill but looked pale and thin, and she told them that she had longed to come and nurse them but had not been allowed.

"Sallee nursed us," said Trudi.

"In the day and in the night," said Arthur.

"*Ach so!*" said Fräulein Mieding when she had asked who Sallee was and had me pointed out to her. Meanwhile Frau Plessen had thanked me coolly but sufficiently for doing my duty by the children and presented me with a dozen linen handkerchiefs of the largest size and nearly as thick as sheets. I felt Elsa's eye on me as I received them and I noticed that her own was fine and small. Altogether her clothes looked as if she spent a good deal on them, and I was not surprised when the children told me that she had been at school in Berlin. No doubt she did her shopping there, too. As we all sat at tea together in the dining-room she talked incessantly, interlarding her remarks so often with *liebe Tante* and *lieber Onkel* that I wearied of this mode of address. Her laugh was artificial and so was her manner, and she was self-satisfied but not ill natured. She evidently considered herself very modern. In fact, she said as much. And she owned to having seen plays and read books in Berlin that Frau Plessen said were not fit for young girls.

"But they were highly interesting," said the young lady. "*Liebe Tante*, you have such quaint ideas. I suppose you think that when a young girl of to-day reads or goes to the theater she wants something pretty and pleasant."

"I hope so," said Frau Plessen.

"But, *liebe Tante*, it is not so, I assure you. One must face facts. The pretty and the pleasant I find simply boring. I must shudder or I am not entertained."

"Pfui!" said Frau Plessen, and looked at me. I laughed. I could not help it. I had heard Isabella David talk just like that in her salad days.

"If you please . . ." Elsa said to me, and her voice was offended. But the children made some diversion and I did not try to explain.

XXVII

I'VE been beating about the bush I know. I've told you about the scarlet fever and about the children and chocolates and about the arrival of Elsa Mieding, but I've not told you much about what a girl like me feels like when the proposal of marriage she has expected with a happy mind turns to a proposal of dishonor. After all if I did tell you it might not interest you. When I think back of it I wonder that I stayed on with the Plessens. I suppose I ought to have told Herr Heiling in burning language what I thought of him and shaken the dust of Hamburg off my feet. But the scarlet fever intervened and at the time seemed more important than my outraged feelings. While I nursed the children I tried to whistle Herr Heiling to the winds and I wish I could say that I succeeded. But if you want the truth and nothing but the truth I did not altogether. I was never in any danger of listening to him. Never for a moment. The idea seemed to me ridiculous rather than alluring. I'm not the stuff tragedy is made of, or perhaps I should say the circumstances of the case did not make tragedy inevitable. If he had asked me to marry him I should have become his wife. As he had ideas I could not entertain we broke off relations suddenly and completely. But you can't be ready to marry a man one day and

indifferent to him the next even if he has disappointed you and made you furiously angry. My anger is not the kind that strengthens with time. Without fresh fuel it dies out unheroically. Besides, I had various aspects of my adventure to consider and remember. There had been something between us that was not a matter for offense: the gradual kindling and discovery of love, the call that youth makes to youth when it is attracted. I wondered why he did not take his stand on his affection for me and tell his parents like a man that he would have me and no other. I would have faced their anger for his sake; but apparently he could not do it for mine. That thought made me miserable enough when I allowed myself to dwell on it. I don't suggest that I ate my heart out all through the winter, but I admit that I was restless and unhappy; and I discovered almost immediately that Elsa Mieding's presence in the family was not going to make me any happier. From the first moment they met she set her cap at Caspar evidently with the full approval of her uncle and aunt. A child might have seen that she had been brought to Hamburg to make a match of it and that though she was willing he hung back. She talked to him, she flattered him, she teased him, she tried to have little quarrels with him and the more irresponsive she found him the more she persevered. She was not either clever or adaptable and I soon understood why, in spite of her liveliness, Arthur called her *langweilig*. At the midday dinner when I mostly saw her I used to long for her tongue to stop; but it never did. Her opinions on all subjects were cut and dried. She delivered them with an air of authority that would have ruffled an archangel and in everything she said

of England she displayed the familiar German mixture of ignorance and conceit. Her manner to me was condescending but sufficiently amiable. She always talked English to me and said she was glad of the opportunity as she meant to go to England some day.

"On your wedding journey?" suggested her uncle archly.

"No, *lieber Onkel*, no. On my wedding journey I shall go to Italy. That stands firm."

"Where will you go when you marry?" said Trudi, addressing Caspar.

"Probably to India," said Caspar.

Trudi's blue eyes opened to their fullest extent and fixed themselves inquiringly on the two people opposite her at table.

"When people marry do they not travel together?" she asked.

"As a rule they do," said Caspar, and his eyes met mine for a moment. I had once told him that I would rather go to India than to any country in the world because I wanted to see the place where my father and mother had lived and where I had been born. Elsa cut in with a little dissertation on British rule in India as taught in German schools and said that she would like to go very well if she could travel where there were no English. I never took up the cudgels for my country when she said anything provocative because it did not seem worth while. But one day I did find myself landed in a discussion over a performance of "The Merchant of Venice" which she said was superb and which I considered objectionable. It was the first time I had been to the theater in Hamburg. The Plessens went nearly every week, but I had never been with them, and this time the place

was only offered to me because Herr Plessen said at the last moment that his dinner had disagreed with him and he wished to stay at home.

"Take Miss Danvers for once," he said to his wife. "She will like to see a Shakespearean play in German."

"She will see something she has never seen before," said Elsa, and turning to me she asked me if I had ever read "The Merchant of Venice." I said I had never read it in German, but she explained that she did not mean that. The professor of *Kulturgeschichte* in her school had told her that English people never read Shakespeare and he had lived in England. I said "Really!" and went to the theater with pictures of Portia and Shylock in my mind that were derived partly from the play itself and partly from photographs and descriptions of Ellen Terry and Irving. At any rate it was a shock to find that the great lady of Belmont giggled like a schoolgirl, sprawled on a sofa and kicked up her heels. The Jew acted well but without romance. He was a stout modern huckster of the Ghetto, often twiddling his thumb and fingers in the way Jews do in Germany when they speak of money. I had seen Herr Plessen and Caspar mimic it when they told anecdotes about Jews. The Trial Scene was played without dignity or any atmosphere of tragedy. Portia trotted on to the stage and made a *Knix* to the Duke and then a grimace to the audience; while in the fifth act, when the moonlight shines on Belmont, the lovers desecrated the poetry on their lips by ogling and horseplay. When Portio said "The moon sleeps with Endymion," she kicked Lorenzo and winked at Nerissa. I felt inclined to say "*Pfui!*" like Trudi, but I did not have to speak at all as Elsa talked for everybody between the acts

that both the little girls had presents for their parents manufactured with my assistance and not to be shown to anyone till Christmas came.

While these small amenities passed amongst us Caspar sat silent and smoked a cigar. Sometimes his eyes were on me; sometimes he seemed to see nothing and to be sunk in thought. I could not interpret his manner to Elsa yet and did not know whether he was on the whole rejecting her addresses or responding to them. They were a great deal together and I was rarely with them. He had almost given up coming to the midday dinner and days passed when I did not set eyes on him, but only heard of meetings and pleasure parties in which I took no part. Yet, when the little girls took Elsa away with them for a moment to inspect their hidden Christmas treasures he got up at once and sidled across the room to me. The boys at the other end were absorbed in a game of draughts and paid no attention to us.

"How goes it with you?" he said in an undertone.

"Very well."

"Then you have no heart. I suffer terribly."

"You hide it."

"Not always. I believe my uncle and aunt suspect something. They stopped my coming to dinner every day . . ."

This was news to me and I looked up in surprise.

"Didn't you know? Don't you see that we are not allowed to meet or even to speak to each other?"

I was silent. It crossed my mind that if we did meet we should have nothing to say that had not been said already.

"Have you a heart, Sallee? Sometimes I doubt it."

I dare say the indignation I felt flared in my face as I moved away from him.

"Don't go away," he said, coming after me. "I was just behind you yesterday when you spoke to Frau Crefeld. I saw how unfriendly she was. Has that *Teufelsweib* made mischief?"

"I dare say."

"What will you do?"

"Nothing. What can I do?"

"Tell them the truth. She has probably told lies."

I had no further chance of discussion because Elsa came back and looked at us suspiciously. I could hardly be surprised at that for I felt that my cheeks were hot and I saw that Caspar's manner did not instantly revert to one of correct indifference.

"Very nice little things they have made," she said to me. "Did you learn them when you were trained as a teacher?"

"I have not been trained as a teacher," I told her.

"Then how can you teach?"

I assured her modestly that I could not teach and she said she had guessed as much when she heard me giving the children a lesson.

"But the children are learning English very quickly," said Caspar.

The game of draughts being over and the board shut Arthur came forward and explained matters.

"We have to learn English," he said. "We could otherwise not talk as much as we wish to Sallee. She is very stupid about German. We have no patience with her when she tries to speak it and we laugh. If you want to laugh you must hear Sallee speak German."

XXVIII

I SAW Caspar's parents for the first time on Christmas Eve when they came to the *Bescheerung*: the distribution of Christmas presents and the lighted tree. Everyone who was related to the Plessens or intimate with them came, too, and the big room in which the presents were set out on tables was crowded. Germans do not hang presents on the tree as we do nor, as far as I know, do they strip it. Frau Plessen's tree touched the ceiling of an unusually high room. It was huge in girth and had the straight stiff branches a Christmas tree should have to look right. It was covered with some kind of white silvery powder and hung with little colored fruits and sugar toys and lighted with colored candles. I loved it because it made me think of the tree in Hans Andersen's story and of the depths of the German forest where it had slowly grown to its present size. It stood in splendor at one end of the room and beyond it I saw the twinkling lights of the Alster, and if I went close to the window, the falling snow. On the other side of the tree the scene was one of hilarity and movement. The children were wildly excited, Herr Plessen looked ruminative but beaming, Frau Plessen's authoritative voice made itself heard at critical moments, Fräulein Popper slopped over in thanks for a length of black silk for

a dress but murmured to someone in my hearing that she would rather have had a new muff. Elsa was in ecstasies over everything on her table and Caspar thanked her for a pair of braces that she had embroidered for him with her own hands. At least she told him so, but I had never seen them in her hands and she had only been in Hamburg three weeks. Perhaps she sat up at nights.

"Promise me that you will always wear them," she said to him.

"But of course I shall wear them."

"From to-morrow?"

"I'll go and put them on at once if you like."

It was unfortunate, but I stood near and could not help hearing the overcharged sentiment in her tone and the ridicule in his; and she knew that I heard and took umbrage. She walked away, tossing her head, and in a pettish voice designed to reach me said something to his mother about *the Engländerin*.

Caspar's mother, the *Frau Commerzienrath*, was one of those enormous women to be met once in a lifetime in England and at every street corner in Germany. I did not wonder when I saw her, that she hardly ever came to the *Jungfernstieg*. "She suffers from the heat," I had been told. "She cannot mount our stairs." I should have said to look at her, that she had over-eaten herself at every meal since the day she was born and had never taken any exercise. Her small shrewd eyes were sunk in her red fleshy face. She had a double chin, her cheeks were baggy; she sat in one chair, immovable and benevolently smiling. She wore a handsome plum-colored velvet dress, costly lace and some magnificent

diamonds. Not many. To wear many diamonds would have been considered "*jüdisch*," and was not the thing in Hamburg. She had made much of Elsa all the evening, called her her *liebe Gör* which is low German for "dear girl" and used humorously by the educated, while Elsa returned again and again to the chair where the *Frau Commerzienrath* sat enthroned, now to effuse over the presents she had received and now to crack some joke with her over the little events of the evening. The *Herr Commerzienrath* was a largely made man with an ugly heavy neck that was square with his head at the back, and red. He had a low, scowling brow, hard eyes and a merciless jaw. You could imagine him getting the best of his bargains by fair means or foul, but I could not imagine his light-hearted son in conflict with him. The wonder was that anyone under his heel should be cheerful and light-hearted. I had been presented to these people when they arrived and the woman had spoken civilly and said something about my having nursed the children through their illness. The man had more or less turned his back on me. He had boorish manners.

I could not spend the evening between the tree and the window as I should have liked to do. When we first went into the room we all moved about looking at our own presents and at each other's. There were five small tables for the family and one long one for their friends, and every table had a white cloth to show up the gifts on it. I was quite taken aback by mine: a handsome stole and muff of astrakhan cloth lined with silk, gloves, scent, sweets, books from the children and in an envelope a hundred marks. Everyone was running here and there thanking everyone

else, chattering, smiling, exclaiming that their heart's desire was satisfied. I had to wait for a chance of getting near enough to the Plessens to speak to them and as I waited I found Caspar at my elbow. The little girls who had discovered my corner of the long table before I did had insisted on putting the stole round my neck and the muff in my hands to judge how they suited me; and I could see in Caspar's eyes that they suited me well. But his eyes were clouded to-night.

"*Na Fräulein*, you have luck!" croaked old Fräulein Popper, ambling up to me and glancing suspiciously from me to Caspar. "Such furs I am sure you have never possessed before."

I made some civil nondescript remark and edged a little nearer to Frau Plessen, but I was not to escape so easily. The old witch had been handling the long ends of my stole and she now burst into a screech of derisive laughter.

"But it is not fur at all! It is only cloth! He! he! he! Never mind. To-morrow is also a day, and perhaps to-morrow . . . when one is young and prettily grown strange things happen . . ."

She leered at Caspar and he glowered at her. Elsa listened and stared sulkily. Frau Plessen pricked up her ears and the *Herr Commerzienrath* turned his hard glance on me and seemed to be aware of my existence for the first time.

"*Nanu*," said Herr Plessen good-humoredly, "if Miss Danvers is pleased . . ."

"I am," I cried so hastily and fervently that people near laughed and Frau Plessen relaxed the severity of her glance as I took her hand.

"They are not furs," she said with a note of apology in her tone, "but they are as warm and very becoming."

"What is wanted is a cap," said Herr Plessen, "a cap of the same fur."

"I will get one," I said, and thanked them both for all their gifts. Then I had to thank Elsa for a little calendar she had given me and the four children for their books, and everyone thanked me for my gifts to them. You can imagine what a hullabaloo there was in the room with all of us talking at once and looking at toys and clothes and trinkets and offering each other sweets and wondering when there would be skating on the Alster. The only restful thing was the big shining tree and I looked up at it when I could get away behind it for a moment to watch the snow. I stood there with my stole round my neck and my hands in the pleasant depths of my new big muff when Caspar came beside me.

"They leave me no peace," he said miserably. "They want me to marry that goose."

I had known it and yet when he told me I felt sick at heart and desolate. His behavior ought to have struck at the roots of my affection for him, and no doubt it had. But not quite hard enough. He seemed less a man of the world than usual to-night: of the Hamburg world that is, material, prosperous and self-satisfied. He looked dreadfully worried and half-ashamed of himself. Of course I know that he ought to have been wholly ashamed of himself, but then he would not have been Caspar Heiling.

"Have you nothing to say?" he went on impatiently. "Don't you care what happens?"

I turned on him then.

"Take me by the hand," I said in a low indignant voice. "Go up to your father and tell him you mean to marry me. Are you man enough for that?"

He bit his mustache in the way he had when he was worried, stared at me, stared away from me and lost color.

"You ask impossibilities," he said. "Have you any idea of the *Krach* there would be and of what would follow? I should probably be sent off to China . . . next week . . . and you back to England to-morrow."

"I've nothing more to say," I told him, and if I had not wished to behave with dignity I should have advised him to go and put on his embroidered braces. It was quite easy for me to slip back into the crowded room by my side of the tree and I did so now just in time. For as I escaped I heard Elsa's voice twitting Caspar with his Hamlet-like humor and asking him if he had hidden himself in order to compose a soliloquy. In some ways she certainly was a goose. She had not the sense to leave the young man alone or pride enough to resent his want of fervor. The way she threw herself at his head was brazen and shocked me, but I thought that if the marriage ever came off she would hold her own. Of the two she had more force of character and she knew exactly what she wanted. She had pussy-cat ways with her elders and sentimental ways with Caspar, but anyone could see that underneath she was as hard as nails.

When I got back into the room the fun had become fast and furious because a figure like the witch in Hansel and Gretel with the cracked screeching voice of Fräulein Popper had arrived with a sock full of

parcels which she was throwing here and there to people shouting *Yulklapp* with each one and getting in response a shout in chorus of *Yulklapp* accompanied by laughter and cries of surprise and delight. The most important presents of the evening seemed to be delivered in this way and some primitive ingenuity had been shown in wrapping them up. Frau Plessen found a diamond ring in a parcel big enough to hold a mummy, and Oscar's first watch arrived in a bit of newspaper as if it was of no account. To my surprise a small soft package bearing my name type-written was hurled at me across the room and when I opened it I found an astrakhan cap, or rather a small close hat. The little girls saw me open the parcel and of course drew public attention to it.

"Someone has sent Sallee a fur cap."

"Who has sent it, Sallee? Is there no greeting with it? Let me see. I shall surely find out who sent it."

"Try it on, Sallee. Here is my new hand-glass. Put it on. It clothes you well. See, Mamma, what Sallee has become. A beautiful fur cap."

Frau Plessen looked at it on my head. My first idea was that she had probably bought it with the stole and muff. But it was of fur.

"Real astrakhan," she said, and looked far from pleased.

"Did you send it, *Mutti?*" asked Olga.

"I know nothing about it," she said, and turned to some other guests with the effect of turning her back on the cap and on me.

"But who can have sent it?" said Olga.

Trudi and Arthur looked at each and began to giggle.

"You know who sent it?" cried the elder girl.

"We know but we shall not say."

"To me you may say. I shall tell no one. I promise."

"We do not even know. We only guess."

"Tell me what you guess."

They put their heads together and giggled again, and I heard something about chocolates. I left the cap lying on the table when at the end of the evening I gathered up the things that had been given to me.

XXIX

BUT I was not to get rid of the fur cap so easily. Next day at breakfast Frau Plessen said to me in a tone as frozen as the Alster:

"You left one of your presents behind last night, Miss Danvers."

The big tree still stood in front of the windows but otherwise the room was in apple-pie order again so that the fur cap, hung conspicuously on the top of an empty chair, had a rakish look and attracted the eye. It was impossible to pretend not to know which present Frau Plessen meant. The cap hit me in the face directly I came in.

"I will remove it after breakfast," I said.

"Sallee becomes red," Arthur informed the company, and I could feel it myself. I looked across the table at him indignantly.

"You are pale," I said hurrying on to another subject. "You probably ate too many sweets last night."

But he was busy with his *Semmel* and butter and did not answer me. There was a silence round the table that the business of breakfast did not cover. Elsa had hardly answered my good morning when I came in and she looked out of humor. There was east wind in the weather I felt, although her *lieber Onkel* and her *lieber Tante* were addressed as usual with mellifluous and dutiful sweetness.

Herr Plessen, like many men, was happily insensible

to small changes of temperature in the domestic barometer and I am sure that he did not know anything was wrong when he looked up from his paper and said:

"Why is a hat hanging on a dining-room chair?" You see he had not noticed what we had been saying about it, but when his gaze lighted on it he was taken aback. Such disorder was unprecedented and enigmatic.

"The hat belongs to Miss Danvers," said his wife.

"But why is it in the dining-room?"

"I left it here last night," I explained. "I will take it away after breakfast and put it in the fire."

"But what is the matter with the hat?" said Herr Plessen with mild surprise. "Why should you put a good hat into the fire? Don't you like it?"

"No," I said. The two ladies were watching me, I knew, although I did not look at them and when I said I would burn the hat the little girls had given a low cry of dismay.

"Who gave it to you?" asked Herr Plessen.

"It was sent to me anonymously. I shall not wear it."

"Ach! Sallee!" moaned Trudi. "How angry then will Caspar be! Surely he sent it!"

I got red again when the child said that, and Elsa glared at me angrily, while Frau Plessen's firm hands twitched nervously and no doubt longed to box my ears.

"Go on with your breakfast, Trudi, and talk no nonsense," she commanded sharply.

"What is true is not nonsense," argued Trudi obstinately.

"Do you want a box on the ears?" threatened her mother.

"But Trudi knows what she says," put in Arthur. "She was there when Caspar gave Sophie a package for a *Yukklapp!* Let no one see it, he said, and he gave Sophie twenty marks. He did not notice that Trudi was there or perhaps he thought she would not understand. But when he had gone Sophie opened the parcel and tried on the hat; but she did not like herself in it. She says her own is more modern."

"I find that Sallee is very unfriendly to Caspar," sang Trudi in her meditative treble. That child was the image of her father. She ruminated over what she had to say and then she said it, regardless of consequences. "When we had scarlet he sent her an enormous box of chocolates and she would not open it. Papa knows this."

That put the lid on. In a voice no one dared disregard the family autocrat ordered silence and a few minutes later when we had all finished our rolls and coffee she bundled the four children out of the room.

"Has Caspar been paying court to you, as he does to every woman passably good-looking?" she asked me bluntly.

"There is nothing between us," I answered after a moment's consideration.

"How could there be anything between you except a young man's nonsense? I hope you can take care of yourself. If not you had better go back to England to-morrow."

"But Otilie," interrupted Herr Plessen, "Miss Danvers has shown herself most devoted. She has

just nursed our children through a tedious illness . . ."

"I am not finding fault with Miss Danvers. I neither forget nor exaggerate what she has done. The children had scarlet very lightly and after the first fortnight she must have had an easy time."

"I did," I agreed.

"I will give that hat back to Caspar myself," continued Frau Plessen.

Elsa was sitting there with a frosty face, silent and sullen. But her silence proved to be of the kind that precedes a storm, for she suddenly startled us all by crying out in an angry voice:

"I am going home. To-day I am going home."

We stared at her.

"I will not stay here any longer to be made a fool of," she added.

I got up and went out of the room, so unfortunately, I cannot tell you what passed between Elsa and her uncle and aunt. However, they must have smoothed her down, because she did not go home but met me in the corridor later in the morning dressed to the nines with a triumph and light in her eyes.

"My aunt wishes me to tell you that we shall not be in to dinner," she said. "The children are to have a walk this morning and to remain quietly at home this afternoon. They must be ready by four o'clock to go to the Uhlenhorst."

I had not been officially told that I was to accompany the family to the Christmas party at the Heilings, but I had taken it for granted, and when four o'clock came the children and I were ready; the children bubbling over with excitement and I wondering

what had happened about the fur cap and where Frau Plessen had been with Elsa. They had come back at three but I did not see them till the car was there to take the party to the Uhlenhorst. Herr Plessen had gone there by himself. When Frau Plessen saw me she said:

"Are you going out, Miss Danvers? You didn't tell me."

I naturally felt rather taken aback and no doubt I showed it.

"You are not invited to my brother's house," she said pointedly.

"Oh! I'm sorry," I murmured, feeling like a fool. "I somehow thought . . ."

I could not very well tell her that as the *Frau Commersienrath* had said good-night yesterday she had deigned to remind me that I was expected at her house to-morrow, but Trudi had no such scruples.

"Sallee is invited," she said now. "I heard Tante Olga tell her that she was expected."

"Will you mind your own business?" screamed Frau Plessen stamping her foot at her, and they departed without me.

It was Christmas Day and before long I was alone in the flat, for the maids had been given leave to go out. I'm afraid I can't make any appeal to your compassion and tell you that I felt lonely, offended or unhappy. When I left the Melkstrasse I had gone from one extreme to the other. There I was lonely; here I sometimes longed to be alone. So when everyone had gone I drew near the stove with "Ekkehardt" which Oscar had given me for Christmas and began to read. When I looked up I saw the silvery tree and

the twinkling lights on the Alster. Inside the room it was warm and quiet and cozy. Sophie had put me some supper on the table before she went out, and beside me on a chair I had a plate of cakes and *Kringeln* and marzipan. Some of the cakes were gingerbread, some were honey and each one was about six inches by four and had one almond in the middle. The *Kringeln* were crisp sugary knots like figures of eight and some were pink and some white. The marzipan had been Arthur's present and he had chosen imitation vegetables colored to resemble carrots, turnips and potatoes. I liked looking at these things because they had come instead of holly, turkey and plum pudding to remind me that it was Christmas. I wondered how Aunt Susan was getting on in Rome and whether we should be in Chelsea together next year. I decided that I had had enough of Hamburg and the Plessens. It would be a relief to get away. There was a little ache in my heart when I thought of Caspar, but only a little one. I had ceased to take him seriously. There had been a flickering flame of love for a short time and he himself had put it out. Was it quite out? Could it be fanned into a fire again? The fire that burns steadily and cheerfully on the hearth lending life its glow through youth to age? I mused and wondered but I remained calm.

The telephone bell roused me and I went to answer it. Who was there? Herr Plessen was there. It had been a mistake. The Heilings expected me and the car was on its way back to fetch me. Would I be ready in five minutes? I said I would and only half willingly put on my fur coat. Then the door-

bell rang and when I answered it Oscar and Arthur greeted me.

"We have come for you," they said.

"But why? I should have been all right in the car."

"We both prefer the car to the party. It is a dull party. After yesterday everyone is tired and one can never eat enough to please Aunt Olga. Always she sings 'A little more' and heaps up one's plate until one feels sick."

"And so at last Arthur said 'Because we are boys we are still not pigs,' and then there was *Krach*," narrated Oscar. "Mamma boxed his ears and Aunt Olga cried and we came away. It is a dull party and at the Uhlenhorst, I tell you, there is always *Krach*. Last time we cut the billiard table.' "

"Caspar and Elsa are *verlobt*," said Arthur in a matter of fact voice. "They sit next to each other and hold each other's hands. When she looks at them Aunt Olga cries. She only cried a little more when I made her a *Grobheit*, and Mamma boxed my ears because it is the second day of Christmas and we all have nerves and are tired. If it had not been me it would have been one of the others. I wish we could stay here with Sallee. A family party is to me a *Greuel*."

"I wish we could stay here," I said.

"There would be *Krach*," said Oscar, and so we set out for the Uhlenhorst in the Heilings' car.

XXX

THE Heilings' villa on the Uhlenhorst stood in a good-sized garden which was now thickly carpeted with snow. From the snow queer-shaped bundles emerged which I took to be roses in their winter wrappings. The house itself was of the florid style of architecture that Germans love, but roomy and comfortable inside. We found about twenty people gathered in a large salon where there was a lighted tree and a display of presents, while on a red silk divan in the center of the room sat Elsa in white with Caspar hovering near her. When I went in with the children the *Frau Commerzienrath* received me civilly and presented me with a copy of Uhland's poems saying that she knew I was a great reader and liked German poetry. I thanked her and then stood about the room with the children, looking at their presents and at other people's. At least, I tried to fix their attention on the presents but the little girls were much more interested in the new *Brautpaar* and told me in thrilled whispers the whole romantic story of the day's doings as they understood them.

"To-day Mamma and Elsa had lunch with Caspar at Bauer's and they ate oysters and drank champagne; and after lunch Elsa went for a drive with Caspar in the automobile and when they came back they were *verlobt*. So quick was it! and imagine . . . Elsa did

me with a disagreeable rasp in her voice, and we escaped together to the hall, where I soon comforted the child. But she had an inquiring mind and a hatred of injustice that often made life puzzling and difficult.

"Caspar did send you the cap and you did say you would not wear it," she crooned. "Perhaps he thought you would be his *Braut* and not Elsa. I wish it was so. I like Elsa very well but I like you better. There is Caspar. Caspar, why do you not go and live in Turkey? I would come too when I was old enough. I love you and I love Sallee and I can bear with Elsa. But Elsa can be *langweilig*. She preaches too much."

"Why should I go to Turkey? What does the child mean?" said Caspar, informing us first that we were expected to join the others in the dining-room and partake of chocolate and cakes.

"In Turkey a man may have several brides," explained Trudi. "I have learnt it at school. It is true. You could take Elsa and Sallee and me, too. Decidedly I would come, too. Think of it, Caspar. It would be heavenly."

"*Heidenwirtschaft!*" said Caspar, avoiding my eyes. "*Geht nicht Kind!* We are Germans! Come. The chocolate is getting cold." But as we walked across the hall together Trudi ran on ahead to open the door and he found time to say to me in an angry undertone:

"I thank you humbly for the basket."

"What basket?" I said quickly. I could not think what he meant for a moment.

"The fur cap then, that you returned to me by my aunt."

"You should not have sent it."

"You need not have forced my hand. I had a fearful scene with my aunt. In the end I gave way. I want my peace. And a basket is a basket."

I waited till I got home and then I took down my fat German dictionary and found that the colloquial meaning of basket was "the mitten, the sack or the bag."

About a week later the Alster was safe for skating and on the ice I met Miss Campbell who came up to me as if nothing had happened to part us and without any preamble began to talk about Caspar's engagement to Elsa.

"It has been a nine days' wonder," she said, her beady eyes fixed on mine intently. "No one thought he would settle down yet. I, least of all."

"Fräulein Mieding is very attractive," I murmured.

"She has a fine color and a good head of hair, but she is not *hübsch gewachsen*. Her figure is clumsy. Is it true that she has half a million?"

"I have no idea what she has. I should think it unlikely."

"Of course I am talking of marks. Twenty-five thousand is nothing. Still for people in modest circumstances it is enough. The Heilings are not really rich people. Just comfortable and the young man has expensive tastes. He could not have married a girl without money."

"Well! He isn't going to," I said, trying to skate away from Miss Campbell. But the ice was rough where we were and I was a poor performer. She kept up with me easily.

"Are you staying on with the Plessens?" she asked.

"I suppose so, for the present."

"I thought perhaps . . ."

She did not finish and I did not help her out. It

was a gay scene on the ice and I was enjoying myself in spite of my presumably broken heart and the irritation of a human mosquito beside me. The sun was shining, the whole city seemed to be out of doors, booths had come like mushrooms in the night and all sorts and conditions of men were skating, promenading, laughing and trafficking together here. Ahead of me were the four children, hand in hand, and a little further on I saw Herr Plessen lumbering along beside his Ottilie who skated well in a dull straightforward way. The lovers had disappeared.

"What does a man mean when he says you have given him a basket?" I asked Miss Campbell.

"Don't you know that yet? But it is an expression in constant use. A woman gives a man a basket when she refuses him."

"But why a basket?"

"That I cannot tell you. It is an expression like any other. When you dismiss a man you give him a basket."

"I suppose it is metaphorical. It needn't really be a basket?"

"It never is anything. Your refusal is the basket."

"But it might be something. If, for instance, a man sent you a present . . ."

"It would never come to that with me," said Miss Campbell frostily. "I have too much self-respect to allow any man a liberty."

I sighed. She put me in the wrong terribly and no one enjoys being put in the wrong.

"When a woman is refused or jilted by a man the Germans say she has remained sitting," said Miss Campbell. "*Sie ist sitzen geblieben.*"

"It sounds as if she was a hen," I said.

"Not at all. It has nothing to do with hens. It means that she is left."

"I see."

"It must be a disagreeable experience."

"Horrid, I should think."

"So mortifying."

"Ye—es, unless the victim got over it."

"She would naturally pretend to . . ."

I didn't see why I should stay there and have pins stuck into me as if I was a wax figure and she a medieval witch.

"I think I must join the children now," I said. "So long."

"Good-morning," said Miss Campbell, pursing her lips at the vulgarity of my adieu. I knew it would upset her.

But I was not in luck that day. Perhaps I was a little ruffled and therefore preoccupied and careless. I certainly was an inexperienced skater, unprepared for emergencies; and I wanted to forge ahead quickly. So I got all the weigh I could on and felt quite pleased with myself when I suddenly saw a whole row of school boys skimming hand in hand towards me. As soon as I saw them we seemed to collide. There was a confused disastrous moment, a *mêlée* in which I went down with my left leg under me. I screamed with the pain of it and never for a moment did I lose consciousness. I wish I could have done so. Boys seemed to be sitting on my chest and boys were weighing down my leg; the injured one that I could not move. A crowd gathered round us babbling, scolding and exclaiming.

"Why don't you get up?" someone said to me.

"Take those boys away," I entreated; and at last they all tumbled to their feet again, leaving me lying. And in spite of the excruciating pain I knew my hat had been pulled off my head and my fur coat half off my body in the scrimmage.

"Are you hurt?" said someone else.

"She looks deathly pale."

"She is about to faint."

"Get a doctor."

"Get a gendarme."

"Who is she . . . an *Engländerin*."

They all seemed to talk at once and their voices began to buzz in my ears and the daylight turned to darkness. I shut my eyes and shivered with cold. Then I opened them again because a little man in spectacles was pulling at my leg and hurting it horribly. I looked at him.

"You have broken your leg," he said.

"I thought so."

"Where do you live?"

I told him.

"Will you be taken there or to a *Klinik*?"

"To a *Klinik*," I said.

"One where you will have to pay so much a week, I mean. Before you could be admitted to a free infirmary there would be formalities . . . delay . . . and your leg should be attended to at once."

"I'll pay what is necessary," I told him.

"I will have you taken to my own *Klinik*," he said then, and gave orders to various people standing around. Then he waited beside me till a stretcher was brought and I could be carried away.

XXXI

THE Plessens both paid me a visit in Dr. Lehmann's *Klinik* that evening after my leg had been set and when I was still in great pain. They were very kind. At least he was really and she was officially, but I could see that she was uncommonly glad not to have me at the flat and perhaps also relieved to have me out of the way for the time. Dr. Lehmann had informed them of the accident.

"I suppose you have telegraphed to your aunt," said Herr Plessen.

"No!" I said. "She is in Rome."

"Even if one is in Rome one wishes to know what is happening to one's kith and kin," he argued.

"The English are so cold-blooded," said his wife. "Family feeling hardly exists amongst them."

I shut my eyes and wished they would go, but they went on talking to each other.

"This is an expensive *Klinik*," said Frau Plessen.

"It looks clean and comfortable."

"I am saying that it is expensive. It will probably cost eighty marks a week . . . if not more."

"When she can be moved we will bring her back to the flat. The children can wait on her."

"What an idea! The children will be going to school again. What sort of person was the aunt?"

They spoke in low voices as if they thought I was asleep and could not hear, but I heard them as I've sometimes heard voices on board ship, quite clearly and yet a long way off. I'd not completely come out of the anæsthetic yet that I had taken when they set my leg and I felt drowsy, dull and ill.

"The aunt was a highly educated person," mumbled Herr Plessen. "One might say aristocratic."

"How can she be in Rome? Had she money then for such a journey?"

"One cannot get from London to Rome without money. I suppose she has enough. It was a quite decent little house and very tidy."

"In that case I do not understand why she allows her niece to take service with strangers."

I think I must have dropped off for I did not hear what Herr Plessen replied, and when I waked Dr. Lehmann had come in and they were arranging to have me moved to-morrow to a general ward where there were other patients and each bed was cheaper.

"I won't be moved," I said. "I like this little room to myself. I'll stay here."

"We think it is too expensive," said Frau Plessen, stiffly. "Besides you will be lonely."

"I don't mind that. How expensive is it?"

"Eighty marks a week."

"How many weeks shall I be here?"

"At least six. Possibly more," said the doctor.

"Very well," I said. "I'll write to Aunt Susan about it to-morrow."

The Plessens' manners underwent a great alteration when they found that I meant to pay my own expenses. Before that they had been kind but worried,

and Frau Plessen had asked me a whole string of questions about what happened when I fell and why I had been taken here instead of to a public infirmary. They took leave of me cordially and Frau Plessen said she would come again soon and bring one of the children.

"Bring them all," I said sleepily, and then they went away.

The next person who came to see me was Sophie, the cook. She arrived on Sunday in her best clothes and brought me some delicious little cakes made chiefly of almond paste.

"I have baked them on purpose for you," she said. "When one is ill one must eat well or one becomes weak. Is the kitchen good here? Do they give you strong food?"

"Very strong and plenty of it," I assured her. By strong she meant nourishing and the food at the *Klinik* was so nourishing that I had told Dr. Lehmann that very morning that I should get fat.

"So much the better," he had said. "You are too thin."

"But flabby, doctor! fat and flabby through having no exercise and overmuch food. *Pfui!*"

He had only laughed; and then the midday dinner had been so good that I had eaten it, and now I knew Sophie would be hurt and disappointed if I did not consume an almond cake before her eyes. I suppose the cakes were made with Frau Plessen's eggs and almonds and sugar but I did not like to ask.

"Such a misfortune!" exclaimed Sophie lifting both hands and bringing down one on each knee. "When I heard of it I wept. I suppose the *Fräulein* will

never walk straight again. All her days she will be a cripple."

"No such thing!" I assured her, but I could not convince her. She had an aunt who had broken her leg and to this day the aunt limped when she walked and one hip had grown out, spoiling the poor woman's appearance.

"So she walks!" said Sophie, mimicking the hobble of a person with one leg shorter than the other.

"How are the children?" I asked. "Who looks after them?"

"That falls upon Auguste and me."

"What about Fräulein Elsa?"

Sophie chuckled derisively.

"She has other ideas in her head. That one must expect. On Wednesday we have the *Verlobungs Diner*. All Tuesday night I shall be at work and when it is over I shall be *kaput*."

"Who is coming to it?"

"Family. Always family and a few old friends. Twenty people will sit down to it. The ham will be stewed in champagne. Yesterday I saw Marie and talked to her. *Gnädige* Frau has played her a dirty trick . . . poor girl. For weeks she could get no place because it was written in her *Dienstbuch* that she had shamefully run away when there was illness in the house and that she was not honest."

"Not honest!"

"Yes! So it is. Such a *Dienstbuch* is a misfortune for a poor girl. Time and time again I have seen it. Marie *hat manchmal genascht*. That I cannot deny. Here a little cake. There a corner of marzipan perhaps. But is that dishonesty? I remember when

Fräulein herself ate a hot gooseberry tart out of the oven. I remember it well because it was the first time that the *junger Herr* came into my kitchen and made sheep's eyes at Fräulein and when you had both gone I said to Marie—"He's got it badly"—and now Marie's living with the Crefelds and that ugly English Fräulein—the one with the nose. . . . *Pfui! ist sie hässlich . . . und neugierig!*"

"Marie is living with the Crefelds!" I broke in, hoping to stem Sophie's torrent of words and ward off her revelations.

"Everything the English Fräulein asks about—everything. She has even paid a visit to Frau Bach and asked questions there. I have said to Marie that she is very silly to let herself be squeezed dry in that way. One can always know nothing. But Marie is afraid of losing her place again."

"But what is Marie supposed to know?"

"About you and the *junger Herr*. How he visited you in the Melkstrasse and how you went out with him of evenings and on Sundays."

"I only went one Sunday," I said, and then I wished I had said nothing.

"I knew he would play you false. *Armes Kind!*" said Sophie, shaking her head sapiently.

But a day or two later when Miss Campbell walked into the room I did not feel cordially disposed to her.

"I saw you fall," she said. "I thought you seemed very unsafe on your skates. I could not see what happened after you fell and I only heard next day that you had broken your leg. Did it hurt much?"

"Quite enough!"

"Frau Crefeld asked me to call and inquire. She

still takes an interest in you. She may come herself some other day."

"I hope she will," I said.

"She is a very tolerant woman," said Miss Campbell, staring round the room and at the same time stroking her muff and smiling to herself. I said nothing but lay there silently wishing she would go.

"Marie Bach is living with us now," she went on.

I said, "Is she?" and shut my eyes. Miss Campbell went on talking about Marie Bach and her *Dienstbuch*; about her efficiency and inefficiency and about the superiority of everything at the Crefelds over anything at the Plessens.

"She had not been used to silver egg-cups," she said. "I was surprised. I should have expected people like the Plessens to have silver egg-cups. She also says that for a dinner of twenty people Frau Plessen has actually not sufficient silver spoons and forks and that on such occasions she makes out with electro-plate. Can it be true?"

"I have never counted Frau Plessen's spoons and forks," I said sleepily. "If you like I'll ask her and say you want to know."

"Does she come to see you then? I thought perhaps . . ."

"What did you think?"

"Well! she must be very much occupied just now . . . as much as if she was marrying a daughter. There will be the *Brautdiner* and then everyone will invite the *Brautpaar*, and there is the trousseau to get and all the furniture, and last but not least the wedding. I suppose all Hamburg will go to that wedding.

When I say all Hamburg of course I mean . . . I mean . . ."

"The Hamburg that uses silver egg-cups," I suggested.

"Exactly. There is one thing I'm really curious to know. As a rule, I am the last person in the world to take any interest in other people's affairs. My mind is differently occupied. But I should like to hear the real facts about Fräulein Mieding's dowry. Can you tell me what it will be?"

"No," I said. "But when I ask about the spoons I'll ask about that too."

She got up then and said she had a thousand things to do and must not waste any more time gossiping with me, but she would come again soon as she considered that countryfolk in a foreign land should stand by each other and that when I got better she would help me if she could.

"I suppose the Plessens are paying your expenses here?" she said just before she opened the door to go.

"Someone will have to pay them," I answered.

"I believe they are liable. I will find out. But this must be an expensive place and they are probably only liable for a small sum. Did they place you here?"

"No."

"Who did?"

"Dr. Lehmann."

She stood by the door then, asking questions until I had to tell her there was a draught and she must please either come in or go out. So looking decidedly affronted she went out and I, feeling decidedly worn, fell asleep.

XXXII

ONE day when I had been in the *Klinik* about a fortnight Elsa came to see me bringing Olga and Trudi who both rushed at me and smothered me with kisses. I rather wished Elsa had not been there, but the children could not have come by themselves and Elsa's effect on our transports was no more moderating than their mother's would have been.

"Sallee *ich liebe Dich!*" cried Trudi, snuggling her head under my arm as well as she could. "Poor Sallee! Has thou suffered much? Hast thou been lonely and missed us as we have missed thee?"

"I bring you some flowers," said Olga, who minded her p's and q's more than Trudi did and now presented me with a bunch of violets: a splendid bunch of Parma violets such as you see in a shop window in January and wonder who has money enough to buy them.

"We may not tell you who bought them," said Trudi. "They were very expensive."

I asked no questions but Elsa sat so that I could hardly help seeing her face and getting the impression that she was not pleased.

"When people are ill everyone sends them flowers," she said in the hard dogmatic way she could assume

at times. "It is a politeness like asking at the door."

"Just so," I agreed, sniffing at the violets. "But these are lovely and when for a fortnight you've been choked with ether and carbolic——"

"Poor Sallee!" said Trudi, stroking my cheek. "How glad Caspar will be that he met us near the flower shop and asked where we were going."

Then she checked herself, turned crimson and stared at Elsa as if she expected to be reproved. But Elsa only gave a little shrug of her shoulders and addressed herself to me.

"I could not get them away from the window . . . the one in the Arcade you know. They had a mark between them and wanted to ask for those violets. Children have no idea. . . . So when Caspar joined us he bought them. He spoils Trudi. What she sets her heart on she must have if he is there."

"When he is married it will be no longer so," said Trudi solemnly. "He has said so to me."

"Tell me about the *Brautdiner*," I said hurriedly, but as I have told you before when Trudi had it in her mind to say something she said it.

"When people get married all their fun is over," she informed us. "It becomes a *schweres Dasein*. Caspar will have no money for violets. Elsa will take all his money to pay the cook."

"The *Brautdiner* was a brilliant affair," narrated Elsa. "My uncle and aunt spared nothing to do the young couple honor. We sat down twenty at seven o'clock and did not rise from the table till nearly eleven. Of course there were speeches and toasts and songs. Caspar spoke very well. I felt proud of him. He said that marriage held no surprises for us be-

cause we had known each other for years and that he knew my nature to be as truly golden as my hair. His father spoke well, too. He said his son could not have chosen a bride who was more welcome in the family and that it made old people very happy when their children placed their affections worthily. He told me that I was very lucky to have won Caspar's love and he told Caspar that I was above rubies and must be always cherished and honored as his most precious jewel. We were all moved and Caspar's mother wept."

"Olga and I had ice pudding," said Trudi. "Sophie brought us great lumps of it when we were in bed. Ice pudding and bonbons and little cakes."

"Those little burnt almond baskets filled with whipped cream," said Olga. "They are my *Leibspeise*. Three I ate of them."

"The boys were allowed to sit up and be at the dinner," said Trudi. "Everything is allowed to boys it seems. Oscar ate too much and was ill in the night."

"Oscar also swarms for those little almond baskets," murmured Olga with an expression of rapture on her face. You would have thought to look at her that she was talking of the sea or the sky.

"You've forgotten your English already," I said. "You're as bad as the German who told his English friend that when his wife didn't lie, she swindled."

I had to explain that venerable chestnut to them at great length and then Elsa harked back to the *Brautdiner* and told me what everyone had worn and how Caspar had complimented her on her dress which had been of white crepe-de-chine with which she wore

the row of pearls he gave her in honor of the occasion.

"I cannot take them off to show you," she said, fiddling at her neck. "I have promised to wear them night and day until we are married."

"Do not wear them when you take a bath then?" said Trudi, gazing at her cousin with immense interest. "However, that is not often?"

I pinched Trudi's arm which was near mine under the bed-clothes, but that did no good as she asked me why I did it. Elsa mumbled something in an annoyed tone about the mediæval arrangements for bathing at her aunt's flat and said that she had absolutely refused to inhabit one after her marriage unless it had central heating and every other modern comfort.

"When are you going to be married?" I said. I was glad to find that I could speak of the event without showing the least emotion. I think my accident and my surroundings helped me. I felt segregated from the world for the time being and screened from the adverse winds that had swept me out of my bearings there.

"Poor Caspar!" said the young lady with a simpering laugh. "I am very cruel I know, but I refuse to marry until our home is ready to the last nail. And when one is critical and artistic as we both are that takes time . . . an everlasting time. He would like to marry at once and leave things to the family, but that I positively refuse to do. Before marriage a woman can get her way. After . . ."

Elsa gave the little shrug of her shoulders and toss of her head that always made me wish to shake her and tell her not to be so silly.

"When are you going to be married then?" I said again, and this time she replied that it would be early in July.

"You must come to the wedding," she said. "Don't say that you have nothing suitable to wear."

I wasn't going to say it. I had the dress with me that I had worn at Isabella's wedding and it was much prettier and more uncommon than anything I had seen in Hamburg so far.

"Perhaps I could lend or give you something!" said Elsa. "There are one or two things I am wearing now that I shall not take with me although they are quite good still. Caspar does not like me in pink . . . well, of course, he adores me in anything . . . but he says pink is not my color."

"But Elsa!" exclaimed Trudi, "how could Sallee wear one of your dresses? It would be too short and much *ach!* much too broad!"

I didn't pinch Trudi again but looked at my watch and said firmly but regretfully that visitors were only allowed to stay till a certain hour and that they had outstayed their time by five minutes. I felt very tired when they had gone and altogether out of tune. I wished I could see more clearly into the future and know what I was going to do next. I should be here for another month presumably, but where was I to go after that? I should still be more or less crippled and unable to travel or get about easily, the doctor said. I could not imagine Frau Plessen putting up with me in such a condition and though I knew Aunt Susan would keep me as long as it was necessary I hated saying, Give, Give forevermore.

I must have fallen asleep in that warm silent room

when the darkness came and I lay there alone; one of those short heavy nightmarish sleeps that people have by day when they are ill. At any rate I woke with a start and such a presage of disaster overwhelming me as I had never known before. I sat up and listened. My heart beat against my side violently and loudly. I was in a sweat. I wanted to cry out but could not. The room was dark, I tell you, and I did not turn on the light. But it was not pitch dark. The faint lingering light of a February afternoon and the reflected light from the snow-covered roofs opposite my uncurtained windows seemed to temper the darkness. At any rate I saw. Saw quite plainly the figure of Aunt Susan standing at the foot of the bed and looking at me. It is most difficult to remember or describe exactly what I felt. I know that directly I saw her I did not feel afraid, nor did I think of her as an apparition. While she was there I did not connect her presence with death or grieve over her. Yet at first I did not speak or feel surprised that she did not speak to me. I looked at her quietly and gladly and she looked at me as she sometimes used to do, with a depth of affection it would have been against her code to put into words.

Then, as suddenly and strangely as she had come she vanished, and when that happened I turned my face to the wall. I suppose the nurse must have found me later in a condition of collapse that alarmed her and that, as I have no medical knowledge, I cannot explain. At any rate I seem to have been in a stupor from which they roused me with difficulty and I waked from it to find Dr. Lehmann bending over me, anxious and evidently puzzled.

"I dreamed," I said, "I dreamed that my aunt stood there at the foot of the bed."

The doctor was a kind simple little man who knew all that can be known about broken legs but not much about nerves. He went into a laborious dissertation on the phenomena of dreams and the obvious connection of this one with the *Schweinebraten* I had eaten for lunch and was put out when the nurse informed him that I had not eaten any meal at all because I had had no appetite.

"So! So!" he repeated, punctuating her reports with nods of his owlish head and blinking at me with his sandy eyelashes. "No appetite. That is bad. Perhaps a little iron . . ."

It was later in the evening and I was alone again when the telegram came from Rome to say that Aunt Susan had died suddenly that afternoon at five o'clock. I did not show it to the doctor till next morning. I wanted to lie alone with sorrow and to think.

XXXIII

THERE were two chairs in my little room at the *Klinik* and the nurse had just placed one for Frau Plessen and one for Frau Crefeld. The two ladies had met on the door step and when my door opened I saw Frau Plessen give the nurse a slight shove in order that she might enter first, for though she had married a Hamburg merchant Frau Plessen had Junker blood in her veins on her mother's side and the least drop of Junker blood makes it impossible for you to enter a room behind a Jewess. I looked from one lady to the other and wished they had not chosen to visit me on the same day and at the same hour. It was not necessary to introduce them. They had the bowing acquaintance that comes of serving on the same committees and I knew that they were both interested in a new crèche and had been at loggerheads over certain details of the arrangements. I had not seen Frau Crefeld since she had cold-shouldered me in the theater, but her manner to-day was cordial again. She wore magnificent furs and when she took off her coat because the room was hot we saw a long pearl necklace that must have been worth many thousands of pounds. Frau Plessen eyed it sorely. She had put on complimentary mourning because this was her first visit after Aunt Susan's death and she came to condole. Frau Crefeld came

to condole, too, and said that she had brought a long letter from Mrs. David which she proposed, presently, to read to me.

"Miss Danvers has been very ill," said Frau Plessen.

"Anyone can see that at a glance," said Frau Crefeld. "A serious accident like a broken leg . . ."

"Miss Danvers' illness had nothing to do with her leg. That was a normal fracture and was healing in a normal way. A broken leg is not an illness."

"In my opinion it is," said Frau Crefeld, getting rather agitated and affronted by the Christian lady's dictatorial tone.

Frau Plessen gave a low derisive snort and said that as her father had been *Hofrath* to a Grand Duke, she allowed herself to know the difference between an illness and an injury. Miss Danvers had been in robust health when she foolishly went on the ice before she could skate and, as was to be expected, broke her leg.

"I was told on good authority that Miss Danvers looked very suffering that day," said Frau Crefeld. "We must also remember all that went before."

"What went before?"

"I understand that two of *Gnädige Frau's* children had scarlet and that Miss Danvers was shut up with them for months. Dr. Jastrow cannot say enough of her devotion and her diligence in doing her duty."

"My dear Frau Crefeld, you evidently have no experience of illness," said Frau Plessen, smoothing her big muff and looking at it as she spoke. "For weeks after the scarlet is over and the children are well . . ."

"Gisela had scarlet two years ago," interrupted Frau Crefeld. "I nursed her through it myself. If I had left her to others I should have considered myself a raven mother."

"With an only child has there *übergespannte* ideas," said Frau Plessen, and then she addressed herself to me.

"I have just engaged a young person to look after the children," she said. "You will understand that I could not wait any longer. My niece's marriage makes me extra busy just now. I am assisting the young pair with their furniture as well as with the linen and the trousseau. They want to get things in Berlin and I must of course accompany them. For the children I have taken a German this time with the highest references. Her home is in Altona, but she speaks perfect English."

"Can one learn perfect English in Altona?" said Frau Crefeld.

"Certainly. In our schools languages are perfectly taught," said Frau Plessen.

So far, since the condolences were done with I had not spoken a word. The ladies had bristled and sparred and stroked their muffs, and I had lain there as stupid as a log wishing they would go. I was not myself yet. After Aunt Susan died I felt so lonely and miserable that I cried day and night and made myself ill; more ill than a young woman with a broken leg that is mending nicely need be. The doctor had looked at me like a wise old owl, administered tonics and asked me whether I was in the habit of seeing things that were not there. The nurse who attended to me said she had three aunts and de-

tested them all and that therefore she could not sympathize fully with my grief. As if I wanted her to! I wanted to be let alone and I did not care a button whether I lived or died. But it is the business of doctors and nurses to combat lethargy of that kind, and in my case they succeeded. I was well enough now, they said, to see visitors, and sure enough two at a time had been let in on me.

"I wonder if Trudi will like the young person from Altona?" I said because it was time for me to say something.

"When I engage a young person for the children I expect her to control them and keep them clean," said Frau Plessen. "Everything else is of secondary importance."

"The person from Altona will probably do all that is required," said Frau Crefeld. "A young lady of your position cannot be expected to wash children."

Frau Plessen looked at her watch.

"You will not be well enough to take a new situation for some time," she began. "When you think of it I shall be glad to help you, but perhaps you intend to return to England."

"I've made no plans yet," I said vaguely.

"Miss Danvers will not think of another situation either here or in England," said Frau Crefeld. "Her aunt has left her everything."

"How do you know?" I said in surprise, for I had heard nothing about it yet.

"Mrs. David tells me so in her letter. She went to your home and an old servant there asked for your address. She said your aunt's solicitor wanted it. So Mrs. David went to see the solicitor herself and wrote to me immediately after. You will probably hear

from him to-morrow. Your aunt has left you all her things and about six hundred a year."

"Had she as much as that?" I said, trying to take the news in but only half succeeding. It was very good news of course, but I was still too unhappy about the way it came to rejoice over it.

"Six hundred a year is not a large income in London amongst people of your aunt's standing," said Frau Crefeld. "It sounds well in marks. Twelve thousand a year! But in pounds sterling! However, Mrs. David says that if you choose to sell your aunt's pictures you could increase your income considerably. She seems to have had one or two of great value . . ."

"But if your aunt could afford to keep you at home why did she send you to Hamburg to be a children's governess?" cried Frau Plessen.

"She didn't send me. She advised me strongly not to go," I explained.

"Then why did you come?"

"I wanted to travel. I would rather see the world as a tramp than not see it at all."

"Absurd!" said Frau Plessen. So I told her about the Japanese general, but she did not seem interested in him. She said the Japanese were yellow men and uncivilized, but that she could easily understand an English girl wishing to enjoy the spectacle of German Kultur for a time and taking any opportunity that offered. There was no need to bolster up a laudable and natural desire like that with the example of a *Stinkaffe*.

Then she got up to go and when the door shut behind her Frau Crefeld heaved a sigh of relief.

"An insufferable woman!" she exclaimed. "Arrogant and disagreeable in the highest degree. How

have you endured life with her all these months?"

"I never set eyes on her from the end of August till the middle of December," I said.

"Where were you then before the children had scarlet?"

"I was by myself in rooms."

One of those uncomfortable silences followed when two people are thinking of the same thing and want to discuss it but do not know how to begin.

"Frau Plessen should be ashamed of herself," said Frau Crefeld, taking the plunge suddenly. "She should have explained to you that you were too young to live alone in such a way."

"She did say something about it," I rejoined. "She wanted me to board with Fräulein Popper."

"That old witch! Na! That could not be expected of you. But you might have gone to some comfortable *Pension*."

"I had very little money."

"But the Plessens have money and to spare. They brought you from England. It was their duty to look after you."

"I'm old enough to look after myself."

Frau Crefeld took up her pearl necklace in one hand and looked earnestly at a large pear-shaped pearl at its apex.

"My Miss Campbell has a bad tongue," she said. "There is no doubt of it. The poor creature is plain and poor and elderly, and she has a bad tongue when anyone young and charming is in question. Unfortunately she found me a room maid who came from Frau Plessen and she has wormed things out of that girl . . . things I can hardly believe."

"I expect they are all true," I said airily.

"True?"

"If they are about Herr Heiling and me. He came to see me several times in the Melkstrasse and I spent a Sunday with him at Grünbeck. Mr. Hope saw us there."

"Miss Campbell says she saw him twice at the Jungfernstieg . . . once late at night."

"Not very late."

"The children were in bed."

"Well . . . children . . ."

"The young man quite lost his head and accused Miss Campbell of spying."

"It looked like it . . . her coming back I mean."

"She had forgotten her glove."

"You know the whole story."

Frau Crefeld looked pensively at the pear-shaped pearl and relapsed into silence again.

"I suppose," she said after a time, "I suppose the young man fell in love with you."

"It looked like it," I admitted.

"But it was impossible for him to marry a girl without money. His father would not have allowed it."

"So he said."

"But now you have money . . . money enough. Fräulein Mieding has less than you."

I wondered how she knew but she evidently did know.

"It's too late," I said.

"Perhaps your heart was not deeply engaged," she suggested, and she meant so well that I wished I knew how to answer her.

XXXIV

THE spring passed, the summer came and I stayed on in Hamburg. I stayed partly because I could not trust my game leg to behave as a leg should on a journey, especially at those awkward moments when there is a scrimmage on a gangway or when the train stands so high above the platform that no one could board it without a skip and a jump. I stayed on, too, because I dreaded going back to the lonely house at Chelsea and because I liked the idea of another summer in Germany. I had not made up my mind yet where I should spend it and I had not taken a ticket for Bayreuth as I should have liked to do, because the Crefelds were going and would have been pained to see me there when I was in mourning for an aunt who had been a mother to me. Frau Crefeld said that if it had been an ordinary aunt it would not have mattered, but the memory of one who had brought me up and left me comfortably provided for deserved to be honored for at least a year. I did not argue with her. People have their own ideas and ways of honoring the dead and mine have nothing to do with the trappings of woe or with abstinence from such a solace to the spirit as music is at its best. But I could not have gone to Bayreuth with them knowing that they disapproved, and I was

not inclined to go alone. When I left the *Klinik* I went to a *Pension* known to Frau Crefeld and kept by two pleasant capable women who gave me a room facing the Alster and respected my desire to be left to myself. I appeared at dinner and supper and improved myself by talking German to my fellow boarders on the rare occasions when they were not improving themselves by talking English to me. My opportunity came when a family of energetic and determined Americans arrived, because they said that the presence of an Englishwoman upset their plans and that if a word of English was spoken at meals they would leave the *Pension* next day.

"That suits me exactly," I said. "I want to talk German."

"Real English *Egoismus!*" said the Germans. "Why should you profit by us when we prefer to profit by you?"

I should have given in or compromised but the Americans pointed out that they had crossed the Atlantic in order to study German in a German city. They were there to be instructed and not to instruct. When the Germans wanted to talk English they could go to London or New York.

"Paris first," said one of them, "then London. Then, when the time comes, New York."

That was in June, before the Serajevo murders and before there was any definite date for war fixed in ordinary German minds. But the idea of war was everlastingly present to them and the idea, too, of English hostility. I never joined in political talk if I could help it, but from the day I landed in Germany I became aware, with foreboding, of political animus.

Even those Germans who were friendly would make a point of the friendliness being extended willingly to the individual but never to the nation. Some of them could never leave the subject alone and against my will I found myself trying to defend Edward VII, our colonial system and the freedom of the seas. Much I knew about them. The Germans believed that they knew everything. The ordinary German is as full of knowledge as an encyclopedia, but it is mostly knowledge with a bias. He is schooled but not educated politically or socially! and so, although he is stuffed with information, he as often as not lacks wisdom and judgment. Still, in those days what Germans said about Edward VII did not weigh on my mind, and I changed the subject when I could and talked of summer resorts. To talk of anything assisted my uncertain cases and genders. I had a little conversation sometimes with the young person from Altona when she brought Olga and Trudi to see me. She could not speak a word of English and I was glad to find had no feelings about Edward VII. Blouses were her main interest in life and I won her everlasting friendship by giving her my colored ones and some of my colored clothes.

"But you have luck!" she said, fixing a pair of round blue eyes on me wistfully. "To be so rich that you can throw away these beautiful things."

I could not discuss my luck with her or deny it, but the children seemed to interpret my silence and spoke for me.

"Poor Sallee!" said Olga. "She weeps for her aunt and she has a mended leg. I am sorry for her."

"I, too!" sighed Trudi. "Very sorry!"

She paused, as Trudi did pause when some idea was fermenting in her mind that she found it difficult to express.

"Since the *liebe Gott* wanted your aunt himself I think he might have called her to heaven a little sooner," she said pensively.

The young person from Altona jumped and so did I.

"*Aber*, Trudi!" the young person began. "What thoughts for such a child!"

"It is Caspar's thought, not mine," proceeded Trudi. "Yesterday I said to him 'Sallee is rich now. Why do you not marry her instead of Elsa?' and he said it was the fault of the *liebe Gott* who should have made up His mind sooner that He needed Sallee's aunt in heaven. He told me that I might say this to Sallee but not to Elsa because Elsa was now his *Braut*. Poor Caspar! Shall I greet him from you, Sallee?"

"We will have tea now," I said, for the children had come to tea by my invitation and I had added all the cakes they liked best to the meal provided by the boarding house. I hoped cream tarts with hazel nuts in them would divert Trudi's ideas, fixed as they usually were.

For a time the spell worked but just when we had eaten all the cakes we could and were turning our thoughts to fondants the door opened and Miss Campbell appeared with Gisela. I had to introduce the young person from Altona, to find seats for the newcomers, to invite them to tea, to ask for more cups and plates.

"We did not come to tea," said Miss Campbell, look-

ing down her nose at the young person from Altona and giving her the chilliest kind of bow.

"But now that we are here . . ." pleaded Gisela, her eyes on the cakes. Trudi handed her a heaped up plate.

"Take," she said, and Gisela took.

Miss Campbell had apparently forgotten the distressful moment when she foreswore my acquaintance and was accused by Caspar of spying, or she remembered and forgave. Anyhow she had changed her mind and on the rare occasions when we met behaved as if nothing had happened. I had only seen her once or twice lately when she came with messages from Frau Crefeld and then not for long. To-day she said that Frau Crefeld would call for me in her car to-morrow and would either take me shopping or for a country drive, whichever I preferred. The young person from Altona looked at me amiably but enviously. A little while ago I had occupied her place in the Plessen household and now I sat, as idle as I pleased in a *Pension* on the Alster, and was invited to drive with a wealthy Frau Crefeld in her car. Such changes may the wheel of Fortune bring to those who are lucky.

"If you have no engagements to-morrow and can be ready at ten, Frau Crefeld will take us to Grünbeck," said Miss Campbell. "She asked me to find out if you would dislike that."

I know my voice did not betray me. I said that I had no engagements and could be easily ready by ten. But the suggestion of Grünbeck made so suddenly and unexpectedly did strike a chord in my memory that I suppose was reflected somehow in my

face. Perhaps I colored a little; perhaps I started ever so slightly. At any rate when I looked at Miss Campbell I saw that she had the smile on her lips and the gleam in her eyes that meant mischief.

"You know Grünbeck?" she said. "Perhaps some other place would be more agreeable to you."

"Not at all," I said, and if I spoke with hauteur it was no more than Miss Campbell deserved. Soon after, saying that Gisela was always sick after eating cakes from a *Conditorei* she got up to go.

"I suppose that you are very busy with preparations for your cousin's wedding," she said to Olga, and Olga launched into a voluble account of the preparations and of the bridesmaids' dresses and of the bride's trousseau. Miss Campbell sat down again.

"Six dozen chemises has Elsa," said Olga boastfully.

"But only two dozen nightgowns," said Trudi. "She wanted more but my Mamma says in these days two dozen is enough."

"Every day come presents."

"Five clocks have come, and silver, pictures, books, jewelry . . . it makes one long to be married . . . directly I have been confirmed I shall marry. That is sure."

"I am going to marry Mr. Hope when I am old enough," said Gisela. "I have told him so."

To my surprise Miss Campbell simpered in a self-conscious way and blushed.

"Mr. Hope has other views, my child," she said.

"We all know Mr. Hope," said Olga. "He is coming to Elsa's wedding. He has sent her a table from

India, a carved one. It will stand in her salon with a palm on it."

"Is Mr. Hope in Hamburg again?" I asked.

"He has been here for weeks," said Miss Campbell with the same little arch smile that I had noticed before. What could it portend? As I was looking at her and wondering, the young person from Altona extracted from her blouse a large crumbled envelope that she presented to me with apologies. She should have remembered it before. It contained an invitation to the marriage of Elsa Mieding and Caspar Heiling. Miss Campbell eyed the printed card as it lay on the table, and then in English she spoke to me in an undertone:

"They know nothing then? You have kept your secret?"

"I have no secret," I said.

"Ach! with me you may pour out clear water. I can understand what you are suffering. It must have been a terrible disillusionment. If only you had listened to me! I remember telling you what his reputation was. Do you still see him occasionally?"

"If you mean Herr Heiling, I've not seen him since Christmas," I said audibly. I hated whispered conversations.

XXXV

I WAS sitting alone that evening with my hands before me, rather tired and wishing it was bedtime. But it was not dark yet and I could see the evening traffic beginning on the Alster. The idea of going to Grünbeck to-morrow with Frau Crefeld had revived my memories of the Sunday I spent there nearly ten months ago, memories that troubled me vaguely now because they reminded me of a fever that had spent itself. However, I had the sense even then to see that it is better to recover from a fever than not to recover. I decided on thinking it over that evening that my pride had been wounded and my heart bruised but not broken. My heart was evidently of a tough constitution and the spermaceti of anger had healed it. Anger and time. Through the mists of pain and sorrow, through the slow succession of idle convalescent months, through the gathering knowledge of my altered circumstances, I envisaged my short excursion into the realm of love and wondered how it was I had stumbled over its borders and come safely back again. I had not seen Caspar Heiling since Christmas or heard from him, so I took for granted that he had recovered, too. I paid no attention to Trudi's chatter.

I was by way of receiving my visitors in my own room which was a large one with a bedstead tucked

away in an alcove, but hitherto, except for the doctor, my visitors had all been women and children: members in fact of the two households with which I was friendly. However, as I was sitting by the open window in the dusk of the June evening the door was thrown open and closed again behind Caspar who came quickly towards me and said in an agitated manner:

"I could bear it no longer. I had to come."

This did not sound like the complete recovery that was desirable nor did he look like it. His eyes were miserable and his expression was furtive and restless, but his eyes devoured me so greedily that I turned away from them.

"You wear mourning," he murmured. "I knew it and yet I had not pictured you in it. You are pale. You have suffered since I saw you. I thought your image was graven on my heart, but now that I am with you again I know that I have only carried a shadow of it with me. You are more beautiful than I remembered, more touching, more enchanting . . ."

He talked like that. I wished he wouldn't but he took me so by surprise that he got a good deal said before I tried to stop him.

"These remarks should be addressed to Fräulein Mieding," I suggested lamely, when he stopped for breath, but he merely said Tcha and went on again. It reminded me of an explosion of pent-up steam that has to have its way and that gets quieter by degrees. He got quieter by degrees, but not till he had told me a great deal about his love, his sufferings, and said a great many things he ought not to have said. I did not want to listen to him, but I could not send him

away without a scene. I sat there at first saying very little and wondering at my own deadness. His fire did not kindle me although it distressed me. I was sorry for him because I could see that he was dissatisfied and wretched but the futility of such an outburst seemed to me pitiable, and at last I said so.

"The meat must be baked for your wedding-table," I reminded him. "Your house is furnished . . ."

"The bed is made and I must lie on it," he interrupted bitterly. "But how if I will not?"

"You are bound in honor . . ." I began.

"I know it. I have struggled as no man ever did yet. It is stronger than honor."

"It should not be."

"How can you know? You are a child. You are not aflame yet as I am . . . but if I could get you . . . if I could teach you . . ."

"Do you think I would?" I exclaimed indignantly. "Do you think I have no honor?"

He had not sat down yet. He had slid into the room with his old sideways gait and now stood staring at me, his greenish eyes dark and vehement, his mustache bitten and hungry looking.

"We must talk things out," he said, and took a chair close by the long one on which I often lay to rest my leg.

"We have not a single word to say to each other," I answered. "I have an invitation to your marriage with Elsa Mieding."

"But it has not taken place yet."

"It will take place."

"That depends entirely on you."

"You rave."

"I have raved . . . by day and by night . . . ever since we parted. Now I am calm."

He did not look it. He had all the appearance of a man whose nerves are at breaking point and who has worked himself up to take some plunge that means kill or cure in his history.

"There is still time," he began. "Nothing is needed but courage that a man must have."

I did not say a word but I thought my thoughts. I imagine they expressed themselves without words as thoughts will at times, for he looked at me in gloomy silence and then said:

"I was not my own master. You know how I was situated."

"Has your situation altered then?" I asked. "Are you more independent of your father than you were?"

He looked at me oddly.

"It would be a nine days' wonder," he answered, as it seemed to me, irrelevantly. "We should have something to face, I admit. But that kind of thing is soon lived down even in Hamburg. When people see you they will understand."

"What are you proposing?" I said bluntly.

"To break off my engagement with Elsa and marry you," he said with equal curtness.

"Have you told Elsa what you want to do?"

"Not yet. Such things are best written. I should go away for a time . . . and if only I could persuade you to come with me . . ."

"You would hardly need to write then. Things would almost explain themselves."

"Just what I thought. But we would be married as soon as possible . . . in England if you wished."

"But I thought you could not marry me without your father's consent and that he would not give it."

"My dear child, if I had known last autumn what I know now . . ."

"What do you know now?"

"Isn't it rather a want of tact to ask? Must I dot the i's? Why did you come amongst us as a girl without money or family?"

"Because I had no money. As for my family, your uncle saw Aunt Susan."

"All this misery might have been spared to us. If I had only known . . ."

"It does seem to have been badly managed," I said, and looked not at him but at some rings of Aunt Susan's that had been sent to me from Rome. One was of diamonds, one of emeralds and another of diamonds and pearls. I had known them all my life and wore them when they came to me because they reminded me of her.

"You are not the same," he went on discontentedly. "Money has changed you. Last September . . ."

"I'm going to Grünbeck to-morrow with Frau Crefeld," I said. "We are to have lunch in that hotel."

"If I had asked you to marry me then you would have said, Yes."

"I'm afraid I should."

"Joyfully?"

"I suppose when one says, Yes, one is joyful," I agreed with some hesitation.

"I offer you everything to-day; everything I have, everything I am."

"Elsa stands between us."

"Elsa will weep a little and then she will marry

someone else. She has not a deep nature. I am not necessary to her."

The clang of the supper bell interrupted us and reminded me that I was hungry.

"Supper!" I said.

He seemed not to hear. At any rate he did not attempt to go.

"If I go straight from here to Elsa and break off with her will you marry me?" he said.

"No."

"Why not? Why will you not do in June that which you were ready to do in September? I have not changed. Why should you?"

"I haven't the same opinion of you as I had then," I began, thinking that he would never go until I had administered some home truths.

"What have opinions to do with love?"

"You behaved badly."

"I behaved as I could. I always meant well by you."

"If I had listened to you . . . if I had been more in your power than I was . . . still more weak and silly than I was . . ."

"But that is past history. Why rake it up? To-day I will do anything you please . . . that I can do. If you would rather we waited and announced our engagement in the autumn . . ."

I shook my head.

"You are wasting your time," I said. "I refuse to marry you."

"On what grounds? I can give you a great deal. A little while ago I was agreeable to you."

He wearied me and I was hungry.

"Go back to Elsa and be good to her," I said, getting up. "She is too good for you."

He followed me across the room and seized my arm so that I had to stop and listen while he spoke fiercely and angrily close to my ear.

"Sallee . . . wait . . . listen . . . I can't live without you. When I see you I am mad for you, as I was before. Sallee, take me!"

"Too late!" I said.

"If you refuse I will shoot myself; I swear I will. Perhaps I will shoot you, too."

The threat left me as cold as his wooing did. I was not alarmed either for him or for myself, but I was glad that the door opened to admit the maid who waited at table. She came to ask me if I had heard the supper bell and whether I wished a cover to be laid for the gentleman.

"Will you stay to supper?" I asked over my shoulder, for I had taken care to go ahead and reach the door.

"Yes, I will," he said in English. "Then we can talk afterwards."

"Afterwards I shall sit in the reception room with the other guests until I go to bed."

"Is that what you always do?"

"I shall do it to-night."

"Then I will come again another day."

"I will not see you again. There is nothing more to be said."

"That is your last word?"

The maid had gone her way and we stood outside my room now by ourselves. But at any moment other people might have appeared and I felt as safe from

his transports as I should have done on the high road. He no doubt knew this for he spoke in a whisper and had a baffled air that I observed with some amusement and satisfaction.

"My last word!" I said.

"I hope that some day you will suffer as I do now."

I left him standing in the hall and went into the *Speisesaal*. It had been an agitating half hour, but I ate my supper in a mood that was nearer comedy than tragedy.

XXXVI

WHILE I ate my supper I thought of all the things I ought to have said to Caspar. I had let him off too easily. I ought to have painted his conduct in such colors that he blushed for it. I ought to have been eloquent and scathing. Of course the difficulty was the usual one in human affairs: the mixture of motives, the mixture of good and bad in his procedure. His passion, or his affection, call it which you will, for me, was genuine. He really was over head and ears in love with me as the saying is. But he had not been man enough last autumn to risk his father's wealth for my sake, and he had been fool enough or villain enough to think he could inveigle me into one of those unions that can only end in misery and disgrace for people like me. I have no wish to lay down the law in this matter. I know that some of the finest love stories of the world are stories of love that has broken all laws, yet remained on the highest plane of tragedy and beauty. But Caspar and I were not born to such great issues. I had been brought up within boundaries that he asked me to break, and he damned himself in my eyes when he asked me. I told you to begin with that I was old-fashioned. Perhaps you would like to call me prudish and namby-pamby, too. If you are really advanced and to-morrowish you probably will. But however to-morrowish you are you should live

"Certainly not. Besides I shall probably not be long in Hamburg."

Frau Crefeld was quite overcome by the heat and nearly asleep. Her eyes were shut and her parasol so unsteady in her hand that it descended on me every few minutes and was righted by our combined efforts because she said she would get sunstroke without it. Gisela looked sleepy, too, so that on the whole Miss Campbell and I were left to entertain each other. But Frau Crefeld seemed to prick up her ears suddenly at the idea of losing her daughter's governess and said in a lazy murmur:

"Are you hankering after Paris again, Rebekah? Perhaps when autumn comes we might find something for you there?"

Miss Campbell turned red, the angry red of a person who hears herself called Rebekah when she wishes to be Rosamund. But she made no audible reply and as Frau Crefeld had not opened her eyes she could not see the signs of Rebekah's anger or the acidity of her smile.

Mr. Hope stood just outside the hotel at Grünbeck when we drew up there and came forward to help us out of the car. I had not seen him since that dreadful Sunday when I had wept in his presence and he had advised me to go back to England at once. I had often thought of him, but I was prepared to find that if he remembered me at all it was with disapproval. He would be civil but chilly and impassive as he had been before when we met. I looked at him as he helped me out of the car and saw to my surprise and relief that he did remember me and that if he disapproved he was not going to show it.

Appearances are deceptive but he seemed delighted to see me again, so much so that he helped Miss Campbell and Gisela rather hurriedly out of the car and came up to me while Frau Crefeld was giving her chauffeur her orders.

"So you're still here," he said.

I said I was. We exchanged a few further remarks, equally intelligent, agreed that the weather was warm, and side by side followed Frau Crefeld into the hotel where we found a table ready for us in a shady corner of the room and near an open window. Frau Crefeld took a chair at one end and told Mr. Hope to sit on her right. As he did so Miss Campbell looked at him with a simpering smile and said:

Vis-a-vis

Ist besser als dicht dabei,

pronouncing *dabei* in the Low German way as if it rhymed with bee, and took the chair opposite him and on Frau Crefeld's left. Mr. Hope made no response. I doubt if he understood. At any rate he behaved as if he had not heard and turning to Frau Crefeld he asked her what she would like to drink. She asked him to order some light wine and when it came the host who brought it placed the bottle before him and left him to pour it out. He filled Frau Crefeld's glass and was about to fill Miss Campbell's when she drew her glass aside so unexpectedly that he only just saved the wine from going on the table.

"If you insist . . ." she said. "Otherwise . . ." she gave a little shudder to express, I suppose, her dislike of wine.

He did not insist. He asked me if I would have some and I said I would if I might have some of the siphon of seltzer water ordered for Gisela with it. He mixed the wine and water for me and then filled his own glass.

"Am I not allowed to drink then on this hot day?" said Miss Campbell in an arch manner.

"The siphon is close to you," said Frau Crefeld.

"But I want wine and water. I want Mr. Hope to mix it," she said pettishly.

Mr. Hope did as he was asked in a wooden way and the meal proceeded harmoniously, although it was impossible not to see that Miss Campbell was throwing herself at Mr. Hope with immense energy and that he showed no inclination to catch her. This spectacle always seems to me more painful than ridiculous and I dislike watching it. So when lunch was over and a little walk was proposed I managed to stay behind with Frau Crefeld who found a shady summer-house with moderately comfortable seats in it and promptly fell asleep. I felt rather sleepy, too, and was listening to summer sounds with drowsy enjoyment when approaching footsteps waked me and I saw Mr. Hope alone.

"Where are the others?" I asked.

"They have gone for a walk," he said, and sat down.

I wondered how he had managed to get away, but I could not ask him. I thought he looked a little ruffled.

"It is too hot for walks," he went on. "I should not have started if I had known that you were coming here."

"I can't walk much yet," I said.

We sat there undisturbed for about twenty minutes enjoying the shade and quietness. He asked me a little about my accident and I asked him about his time in India. Frau Crefeld was fast asleep and did not disturb us. It was when we saw Miss Campbell and Gisela returning to us that he surprised me.

"Where are you staying?" he asked, and I told him.

"I should like to come and see you," he said, and as I felt pleased I dare say I looked pleased.

"When can I come?" he went on, but before I could gather myself together and suggest a day and a time Miss Campbell and her charge had joined us. She looked like vinegar and said that the sun had given her a headache.

"I shall return by train," she announced in a pugnacious voice. "Nothing will induce me to return in an open car in the heat of the day. What train are you going by, Mr. Hope?"

XXXVII

I WAS not in any way to blame for what followed, at least not actively to blame. I sat there and did not speak, yet Miss Campbell's wrath glanced from Frau Crefeld who made the arrangement that provoked her and lighted on me.

Frau Crefeld waked suddenly from her siesta, blinked at us amiably, told Gisela she looked tired and asked Miss Campbell why she had kept the child out in this heat. Frau Crefeld's manner with Rebekah-Rosamund always amused me. She was kind and even long suffering but she had a way of riding rough-shod over Rebekah-Rosamund's pretensions that must have been galling and which I wondered to see accepted submissively although I knew how hollow the pretensions were, how well the young lady knew on which side her bread was buttered and how much she liked butter with her bread.

"What are you saying about a train?" asked Frau Crefeld.

"I was saying that I would rather go home by train if it can be arranged," said Miss Campbell. "The heat has given me a headache."

"By all means," said Frau Crefeld. "You can take the one that leaves at four o'clock."

Then, turning to Mr. Hope, she said:

"Will you come back with us in the car?"

"I shall be delighted," said Mr. Hope.

Miss Campbell looked furious and opened a little bag she carried only to snap it to again with a vicious click. She did this three times in succession and at last Frau Crefeld said:

"How fidgety you are, Rebekah! Are you looking for anything in that bag? I shall give you money for your journey unless Mr. Hope has a return ticket that you can use."

"I have a first class return," said Mr. Hope, and took a ticket from his waistcoat pocket which he offered to Miss Campbell. She took it from him with a glance that I hoped for her sake he did not notice. It gave her away and as far as I could see he was not taking any. When I use a dreadful slang phrase like that I always think of Aunt Susan and of the correct English in which she would have expressed the same sentiment. She would have said that the gentleman made no visible response to the lady's advances, but even Aunt Susan got her dander up at times and I remember her describing Ann in *Man and Superman* as a brazen hussy. Aunt Susan's idea was that the men should do the courting and that a self-respecting woman would rather die of love than confess to it unasked. My idea is that these affairs are too diverse and complicated to be brought under one clear-cut general rule. Take Othello for instance. He did not speak till Desdemona had given him a hint. Men are kittle cattle.

But no doubt Othello had opened his heart to Desdemona long before he opened his lips and if I could have seen the least sign of such a state of things in Mr. Hope's manner to Miss Campbell I could have forgiven her for being what the Cornish call "forthy"

in her manner to him. At least I should have decided that it was none of my business and that if he liked being fawned over and I disliked seeing it I need only shut my eyes or avoid his company. But he hated it. I felt sure that he hated it. A man does, unless he is the wrong stuff himself. He did not look at her when he gave her the ticket and so I suppose he did not see what I saw, that when she had had it in her hand a minute she absent-mindedly tore it into little bits. He certainly looked surprised when she gave a shriek, cast the bits of cardboard on the table and said:

"I'm certainly *duselig* to-day. See what I have done. *Schadet nichts*. There is room for us all in the car if someone sits beside Johann in front."

"You can," said Frau Crefeld. "It will be good for your headache."

Miss Campbell tossed her aching head and glanced across the table at me.

"I had a little talk to the landlord just now," she said. "It is strange. He is sure that he has seen you before."

The attack was so sudden that I was not prepared to meet it and I did what was perhaps the silliest thing possible. I looked at Mr. Hope. I was glad he was there, though I hardly knew why. But unfortunately Miss Campbell saw the look and went green with anger.

"He says that you came here one Sunday last September and he thinks that you came with Herr Heiling . . . the young one of course."

"He seems to have a good memory," I said. I had to say something.

"It seems to have been a funny affair. Herr Heiling ordered a table for two but did not use it. He sat with his family and you disappeared."

"I went home," I said.

I tried to appear unconcerned, but no doubt I only half succeeded."

"How do you explain it?" said Miss Campbell.

"I don't explain it," I said. "I see no need."

"Quite right," said Frau Crefeld, who was awake enough by this time. "What you did last September is not Rebekah's business. She is so inquisitive."

Miss Campbell got up as suddenly as if she had been a Jack-in-the-box.

"I shall go home by train. I can get another ticket," she said, and marched away with a glowering countenance. I felt most unhappy and I think Mr. Hope did, too, but Frau Crefeld seemed to take such tantrums as a matter of course. She whipped out her purse and took some money from it.

"We shall be more comfortable without her," she said. "Run after her, Gisela, and give her this. She never has a groschen of her own."

"I'll go," said Mr. Hope, and was on his way before Gisela had realized what her mother wanted.

"That is a man with whom I should fall in love if I were a girl," said Frau Crefeld, and taking me un-awares by her quick change of subject she asked: "Do you ever see Herr Heiling now?"

"I saw him last night," I said.

"Where?"

"He called at the *Pension*."

I suppose my face or my manner told her something I would rather not have told.

"He is still making love to you," she surmised. "At the eleventh hour he would leave his bride and burn through with you. Now that you have money he reckons that he would be forgiven. Such a Don Juan!"

"But you don't even know him," I cried. "How can you . . ."

"My good child, look in the glass and ask yourself whether a young man is likely to give you up for Fräulein Mieding if he can possibly help it."

"I have done with him," I said. I thought it best to make it clear. "I shall not see him again."

"There they come!" piped Gisela, who could see down the garden path from where she sat and sure enough Miss Campbell reappeared with Mr. Hope, her good-humor restored.

"I have allowed myself to be persuaded," she said. "Mr. Hope thinks I shall suffer less from the heat in the car than I should in the train."

As it turned out none of us suffered from heat going home because a thunder-storm rolled up suddenly, broke close to us and cooled the air. We sat in the hotel while it lasted and Gisela came on my knee and hid her head in my neck. Frau Crefeld remained calm because she said she had lived through worse storms without harm, and Miss Campbell told us that her nerves were peculiarly affected by electricity. She was happy to say that she did not know what fear meant but she was hypersensitive and could not help starting and screaming with every crash. If she had not explained her behavior in this way I should have said she made an exhibition of herself, especially when she clung to Mr. Hope's arm and

implored him to hide her. He extricated himself as soon as he could without being positively brutal and went outside to pick up hailstones. At least he said so, but as there had been no hail there were naturally no stones to pick up.

"I feel better now," Miss Campbell announced when the storm was over, and it seemed only civil to say that I was glad to hear it. But as we went towards the car Frau Crefeld told me in a low voice that Rebekah had always been of a trying temper and that latterly she had begun to think she must let her go.

"It is not good for Gisela," she explained. "One moment Rebekah is so cross and mopey that the child does not know how to please her, and then again she is in such high spirits that we ask her if she has won the big prize in a lottery. She used to be uniformly unamiable and then I could deal with her. I wonder if Mrs. David could find her a post on the strength of her German."

"Is it good?" I asked.

"Not at all, but English people will not know that."

I nearly said that they would know she spoke Whitechapel English, but I did not want to do Miss Campbell any harm. She had her living to earn.

"Of course anyone can see what the trouble is," continued Frau Crefeld. "She is crazy about Mr. Hope and I am afraid that he positively dislikes her. Silly goose! She is forty if she is a day."

I was glad that I did not have to reply as we were getting near the car and might have been heard. The spectacle of Miss Campbell's infatuation had distressed me all day and I did not want to discuss it. Mr. Hope insisted on taking the seat next to the

chauffeur on the way home so we went back as we had come. But the air was cool now and the dust laid on the roads. When we got back to Hamburg Frau Crefeld asked Mr. Hope and me to stay to supper and we had an agreeable evening which Herr Crefeld only disturbed for a moment by saying that he did not like the news that reached him from Berlin. Something was brewing there. Preparations were being made very quietly and secretly. People were restless and expectant. Then for a few minutes the talk turned on war and on the way it would upset things for a sort time if it came. I did not feel much interested and was glad when we went on to discuss our summer plans which seemed to concern us more nearly than politics and money-markets. The Crefelds were going to the Black Forest after Bayreuth and suggested that I should go with them. I said I would, gladly, and Mr. Hope said he would join us there in August. Miss Campbell displayed her acquaintance with Auerbach's novels and incidentally my ignorance. I had not read *Barfössele*.

"But it's an idyl," she piped affectedly, "an idyl. I have a special interest in it because when I was a little girl I loved to run about barefoot and my uncle, a most dignified and wealthy man, caught me so one day and ever after called me Barfössele. It became my pet name. I am not sure that when I see the old thatched eaves and the forest and the village street I shall not think myself a child again and whip off my shoes and stockings and dance for joy. I am not at all ashamed of my feet."

I did not mean to catch Frau Crefeld's eye, but it happened. So I got up rather hurriedly and bid good-night.

XXXVIII

CASPAR did not commit suicide. He married Elsa on the appointed day, made a merry speech at the bridal banquet and departed for a honeymoon in the Tyrol in the best of spirits. I did not go to the wedding but I was told about it by the Plessens when I went to see them early in July. They were all going to Schöndorf again although Herr Plessen looked gloomy and said that the Serajevo murders might lead to war. I said I hoped not, much as you say you hope there won't be an earthquake in Central Asia or a revolution in Chili. You know that violent events must be uncomfortable for somebody, but when you have always lived in Chelsea it is difficult to imagine what a storm center really means to those engulfed in it. I had promised to go to the Black Forest with the Crefelds and then to the Italian Lakes, where I was to meet the Davids and the Saddingtons. After that I supposed I should go back to Chelsea and perhaps stay with the Davids while I decided what to do about the contents of Aunt Susan's house which were mine now. Mrs. David took for granted that I could not live there alone and I did not think I wanted to. I hardly knew what I wanted, but I knew what I did not want and that was to see Miss Campbell about five times a week. She did not like me and I did not like her. There was

no pretence of friendship between us. Yet we were forever meeting and when we met she confided in me. I did not want her confidences; I tried to stop them. But I might as well have tried to stop a shower of rain. They were poured forth when we met at the Crefelds and sometimes when we met by chance and when she came uninvited and unencouraged to see me.

"I have no doubts now," she said one afternoon. "If I doubted before I could do so no longer after last night."

I did not ask her what had happened. It was not necessary. I knew that I should be told in detail unless I turned her out of the room, and I was not prepared to go those lengths. It resolved itself this time into the recapitulation of a dialogue that seemed to be inadequate, but she said truly that I had not heard the tone of his voice when he addressed her as "partner" at bridge or seen the meaning in his eyes. She had taken a hand at bridge last night, she explained, because some man the Crefelds had expected had disappointed them at the last moment.

"I didn't know you played bridge," I said.

"I play extremely well. My brother-in-law is a brilliant player and he taught me. I have an aptitude for cards. Some people have. It is not more to their credit than the color of their eyebrows. But men like to play with me. Last night at the end of a rubber when we should have cut for partners again he said, 'Why not remain as we are?' "

"What did you say?"

"I made some little joke about not being partners for life just yet. I can usually think of something

witty to say. I believe men value brains in women more than a pink and white skin . . . don't you?"

"I've no idea," I murmured. "I don't really know much about men. You see I always lived with Aunt Susan . . ."

"You're a sly one!" she exclaimed to my amazement. "You must have known a good deal about one man not so long ago. I certainly thought that night when I found him with you . . ."

She paused. I went on with a bit of fine sewing in my hands and I hope my silence and my manner showed her that I was not pleased.

"Tell me," she continued insinuatingly. "Tell me!" How much did Frau Plessen know?"

"Know what?"

"About your relations with Herr Heiling?"

"What do you mean by relations?"

"Ha-ha! the lady fences. That tells a tale. However, what is ancient history shall not be resuscitated by me. I can afford to be generous . . . I who am the happiest woman in the world. Tell me . . . where did Fräulein Mieding buy her trousseau?"

I told her as far as I knew and wondered at her while I sat there sewing. At moments I wanted to kick her downstairs and at other moments I felt more moved by compassion than by wrath or derision. She really believed, or said she did, that she was about to marry Quentin Hope, and she talked of when the marriage would take place, where they would go for a honeymoon and where they would live. I did not know what to think. She spoke with absolute conviction and yet avoided any test of reality. For instance, when I asked her if the Crefelds knew what

had happened she said that she found them both unsympathetic and never talked to them of her affairs. She charged me to say nothing to Frau Crefeld and explained that she wished to surprise them with her news when everything was settled. She said that she had written to her brother-in-law and given him an account of Quentin's financial position which she hoped Mr. Wolff would consider satisfactory, and she had asked her sister to buy her some boots and stockings in Paris as she could not find German ones that displayed the elegance of her feet to her contentment.

"Does Mr. Hope know that you are taking these steps towards your marriage?" I asked. I felt that I wanted to say something that would prick a bubble and found it more difficult than I expected. I felt sure it was a bubble and to see the silly woman pursue it made me uncomfortable and ashamed. I hoped for the sake of my sex that Mr. Hope did not know.

"We have so few chances of seeing each other," she answered. "I have no wish to say anything against Frau Crefeld but there is no doubt that she is jealous. She has always looked on Quentin as her property and the idea of his marriage drives her to fury. I should not be greatly surprised if there was *Krach* some day and I left suddenly."

"I suppose you would go to Paris," I said.

"Not at all. I should go straight to him. There are times when a woman must take her courage in her hands."

I fixed my eyes on my sewing and was therefore not looking out of the window when Miss Campbell said in an agitated tone:

"There he is! He has followed me here. Where

can we see each other? Will you leave us or is there another room?"

"There is a salon which is usually empty," I said. "I shall stay here."

"I will go out into the hall. I will take him . . ."

She was in such a state of fussy excitement that she hardly knew what she was doing and as she buzzed across the room dropped her bag and all its various contents on the floor. I could not move quickly yet, but I got up in order to help her. However, before I reached her Mr. Hope came into the room, but seemed about to retreat in dismay when he saw Miss Campbell on her knees on the floor. She was still engaged in collecting the odd assortment of lozenges, hair-pins, pencils, keys and loose coins that had rolled away from her and she remained on her knees when Mr. Hope, after a moment's hesitation, came further into the room.

"See what has happened!" she cried. "I was hurrying out to see you. Miss Danvers says that the salon is at our disposal . . ."

He took no notice of what she said, recognized her frostily and came on to me. I went back to my chair and he took the one opposite me. I rather expected Miss Campbell to repeat her invitation to the salon but she did nothing of the kind. As if Quentin's actual presence brought her down from the fool's paradise in which she allowed herself to dream when he was away she quietly took the chair she had occupied before, joined in the conversation, seemed at first determined to outstay him but at last to our relief got up to go. Then, for a moment, she played the fool again.

"I am walking back," she said in a wooing voice. "It is a lovely afternoon."

As he said nothing at all I spoke for him and agreed with her about the weather.

"Frau Crefeld expects you this evening," she went on, addressing the irresponsible young man.

"Not till eight o'clock," he said.

"It is now half past six," she said, consulting her watch.

"It is a quarter to seven," said he, looking at his own.

"You will not walk with me?"

"No," he said.

He did not give a reason or excuse himself or tell a white lie. He did not deny her brutally or lose his temper. But he did not want to walk back with her, so he would not do it and said so downrightly. Perhaps he was not adroit but he was effective. She flounced out of the room in such a tantrum that she forgot to say good-by to me, and she banged the door after her. When she had gone we were both silent for a moment and then we talked of other things. I am sure she was in his thoughts as she was in mine, but we did not speak of her. We were not intimate enough with each other for that. He asked me a good many questions about my lame leg and I wondered why he was interested in it until he said that he thought there might be a war and that I might want to leave Hamburg in a hurry.

"But if there is a war it won't come to Hamburg?" I said. "I should be as safe here as anywhere. However, I am going to the Black Forest in August. Will there be a war there?"

"It won't be a joke wherever it is," he said grimly. "I wish you would go back to England at once . . . while you can travel in comfort."

"I've just told you I'm going to the Black Forest. I have my ticket and my rooms," I said. I felt mortified. If I stampeded now to England I should probably never see him again and he seemed to envisage that result of his advice without a qualm. I did not; but I would have gone to the stake rather than let him know it. I was not going to follow in Miss Campbell's footsteps.

"Have you any ready money?" he said next, to my amazement and discomfiture. I did not think when he came in that he had come to talk about money. I hoped he had come because he felt, as I did, that we liked being with each other.

"I have money in the bank," I said rather stiffly.

"Take it out."

"I shall when I want it . . . of course."

"Take it out to-morrow . . . and exchange most of it for English gold."

"But why? I suppose if there is a war there will still be cakes and ale . . . banks I mean and business as usual. I never heard of a war that disturbed daily life."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-one."

"Who looks after you now?"

"No one. I can look after myself, I assure you."

He did not contradict me, but his silence was skeptical. And when he got up to go he told me again to take my money out of the bank.

XXXIX

E NTER Miss Campbell in a state of frenzy, her features twitching, her appearance battered.

"Money!" she cried. "I must have money. I must get away to-night.

I had not been out for a day or two or seen any papers, but I had noticed of course that the *Pension* was like an ant heap disturbed by a brick. The young men were packing up and the old ones were recalling the events of forty-four years ago. The women were excited and either tearful or triumphant, and the two friends who ran the *Pension* had assured me that I need not disturb myself in any way. There would be a war but it would be over in a few weeks and while it lasted they engaged to look after me as usual. Traveling would be troublesome on account of the movement of troops and if I took their advice I should give up the Black Forest and stay peacefully in Hamburg. I had not said yea or nay yet, but I had followed Mr. Hope's advice and taken my money out of the bank three days ago. There was not much there because I had not put in a check that had just arrived, but I had enough I thought to pay what I owed and get back to England if necessary. I should not have enough, however, if I lent money to Miss Campbell and I asked her why she did not get what she needed from Herr Crefeld.

"He says he cannot. He is very disobliging," she assured me. She was in a state of panic evidently, her arrogance wilted for the moment, her nerves unstrung.

"I must get away to-night," she repeated. But when I asked her why, a cunning gleam came into her eyes for a moment and she told me that her sister in Paris was mortally ill.

"I must be with her," she said. "It is a matter of life and death. If you lend me the money I will return it the day I arrive."

I still hesitated, for, to put it plainly, I did not believe her, and I did not understand why she was so urgent.

"I think of staying here," I began.

"Then you can lend me the money."

I think I should have refused if she had not been in such a state of terror and excitement. Her eyes were starting out of her head, her color was greenish where it was usually only sallow and her voice chattered uncontrollably. After all it was not like giving her my cup of water when I was dying of thirst. It was not yielding my chances of life to her or, indeed, doing anything generous or heroic. At any rate I did not think so because at the moment I did not know in any way what war between England and Germany would entail, and there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so. I felt unwilling to lend her my money because I disliked her and did not expect to see it again, and I felt rather mean and grudging as I unlocked the drawer where I kept it and asked her how much she required. When I had given it to her I had not much left.

"I suppose things will settle down in a day or two,"

I said. "Herr Crefeld will cash me a check if I want it."

"No doubt! No doubt!" she muttered, and shuffled hastily out of the room after assuring me with the air of one conferring a favor that my money would be returned to me by her brother-in-law directly she arrived in Paris.

When she had gone I began to wonder whether I had been a fool, and for more than an hour I sat beside my window in a confused and tumultuous state of mind that I should find difficult to describe in my old-fashioned way. I will therefore attempt it in the new fashion and I hope at any rate to suggest that my thoughts were various and incoherent.

Miss Campbell. Twitching face. Terror. Hot day. Slanting sunbeams. Dirty bank notes. Smell of roasting meat. Shrill steamer whistles. Sun on the water. Tramp of feet outside. Railway station. Crowds. Lamé leg. War. Troops. Men saying good-by. Women screeching. *Belegtes Butterbrod* at stations. Brass bands. Battles. Blood. Wounds. August sun . . . England. Big clean-limbed men. Cockneys. Chelsea Embankment. Our little square and the quiet house in it. English people again. Excitement. English newspapers. Crowds. No money. This room a refuge whatever happens. People on steamboats. Dust. Heat. The Schöndorf woods. Plessens. Trudi. Trudi at war with England. Perhaps! Nonsense. Who makes wars since no one wants them? Caspar! Will he have to fight? Russia! Rather near Hamburg. No danger to non-combatants now-a-days. The world civilized and humane. Bayonets. Quentin! Wonder if he has gone. Miss Campbell. Curious thing terror. Stronger passion

than love in some natures . . . not in all . . . not even in animals. Wonder if I'm a coward! Who knows. Her gloves were dirty and her veil torn. Usually neat but never what the Germans call appetizing. Like our English word dainty better. England. Begin to wish I was there. After all if there is a war . . . one's own country . . . suppose I am a fool . . . Black Forest. Wish I had someone belonging to me . . . a brother or even an uncle . . . here in Hamburg. Ought to be self-reliant . . . modern woman . . . suffragettes . . . Isabella. Troops marching past the house and singing *Deutschland über Alles*. Very proper sentiment for Germans. . . . Means my country before myself . . . not what English people think it means. . . . Quentin wanted me to go back a week ago . . . wish he . . . but he didn't . . . put that out of my mind anyhow . . . not so easy . . . is there a line about the big fire putting out a lesser . . . but it never was a fire . . . just dilly-dally . . . wish . . . Oh damn! Quentin!"

He walked into the room unannounced, and as if he had no time to lose. He did not look like Miss Campbell, panic-stricken, but he looked grave and tired.

"I could not come before," he said. "What arrangements have you made?"

"None!" I answered. "I am going to stay here. I shall be quite safe."

"I dare say you'll be safe, but if England comes in you'll be made uncomfortable in various ways. The Germans are not accommodating when they are angry and if they find themselves up against us they are going to be very angry."

"But after all . . . what could they do to me?"

He sat down opposite me. .

"Of course it's not my business," he said. "I've no authority over you. If I had . . ."

"Yes! If you had . . ." I wanted him to finish because the idea was a pleasant and restful one although of course not one for me to dwell on.

"I should take you back to England with me to-night."

"To-night!"

"By to-morrow it may be difficult . . . perhaps impossible."

Both his manner and his advice surprised me.

"Do you mean to say that I might be prevented from traveling if I wanted to?" I cried.

"You would probably not be allowed to leave Germany till the war was over. You would be under police supervision, suspected of being a spy . . . perhaps without money."

"For weeks and weeks?"

"Weeks? Who knows? Years perhaps."

I looked at him incredulously, but even for weeks the idea of police supervision was uncomfortable. The police existed in order to help and safeguard people like me, not to supervise and I had heard stories of the German police, of their insolence and brutality. I had not come across it seriously, but I could imagine what it might be from a single interview that had been necessary when I had to explain at the Police Office that I had not provided myself with a passport.

"Did you take your money out of the bank," he asked. "There is no money to be got anywhere to-day."

"Then that settles it," I said. "I can't go. I have an English check for a hundred pounds . . ."

"No one would cash it."

"I suppose Herr Crefeld would."

He tried to explain the state of affairs to me: the sudden financial panic that would probably right itself but that made it impossible even for a rich man like Herr Crefeld to go to the bank and get bare cash there. I did not understand, but I told him that I only had enough in the house to pay for my *Pension*. He said it did not matter. He had enough for us both and I could borrow from him; and I, thinking it did not matter, told him of Miss Campbell's visit and of my loan to her. But he looked rather angry when he heard of it.

"She was going off with your money and leaving you here without a penny!" he said.

"I suppose she thought the Crefelds would look after me."

"They have gone to Berlin. Didn't she tell you?"

"No . . . but there is the post."

"You won't want the post. You are going to let me take you to England. It is six o'clock. I'll come for you at ten. Don't try to bring anything but a hand-bag."

"But what will happen to my things?"

"You'll probably lose them."

"All my books!"

"You'll buy new ones."

I hesitated.

"If I stayed here . . ." I began, but he would not listen.

"Ten o'clock," he said again, and I knew that I should be ready.

XL

WE hardly spoke as we drove to the station in the Crefelds' car. Mr. Hope had told me when he came that he had luckily been able to borrow it, otherwise we should have had to walk and take trams. It was impossible to get a taxi. I did not try to break in on his silence because I had seen that he was anxious and pre-occupied, and I wondered whether the war was upsetting his business arrangements and perhaps his future plans. It is difficult now, after nearly five years, to realize how ignorant most of us were of what was coming and how slightly stirred. I had thought it annoying to leave clothes and books behind, but I imagined they would be sent after me and I had packed everything I wished to keep in a big trunk. I need hardly say that I have not seen it from that day to this. As I was obliged to travel with what I stood up in I naturally put on the best things I had; the best things suitable for traveling, I mean. I had come across the bridesmaid's dress I had worn at Isabella's wedding and never once since, but of course I had not been able to bring that or my books or the furs the Plessens had given me at Christmas. I did think of bringing them, but it was a hot summer night and I decided that they would be in the way. I thought that I myself, with my more or less lame leg, was

enough of an undertaking under the circumstances, so I only packed the few valuables I possessed and what I should need for a night in the train in a small leather dispatch box I could carry. But when Mr. Hope saw me he said I ought to have a warm wrap for the boat so I unlocked my trunk and took out the fur coat Mrs. David had given me when I left London more than a year ago.

"I'm glad I'm going back to England," I said as we neared the station, for when I saw its lights I felt moved and uplifted by the thought of being in my own country again.

"I am glad, too," said Mr. Hope, and he seemed to me to put an avowal into his voice and into his eyes and smile: an avowal for which he had found no words yet but which startled and rejoiced me. I got out of the car and waited where he told me in the crowded station, my thoughts whirling, my mood dreamy and dazzled. I saw the distracted, panic-stricken crowd through the veil of my own happiness and their antics seemed far away. Such stuff as dreams are made of. The reality that mattered just then was a memory and I sat there warmed and enclosed by it.

It gave me a disagreeable shock suddenly to see Miss Campbell coming towards me, an enormous green hold-all in one hand and a bright blue portmanteau in the other, both as evidently made in Germany as to my mind she was herself. She dumped the portmanteau at my feet, let the hold-all down so clumsily that it pitched against me and uttered a loud groan.

"He is bringing the other things," she said.

I wondered what she meant.

"I have been here more than an hour," she said. "I ordered the car for 8.30. When I heard that he wanted it at 9.30 and was coming here I naturally waited. I cannot understand why he did not tell me. How did you get here and where are you going?"

"I am going back to England."

"You said this afternoon that you would stay on in Hamburg."

"I changed my mind."

"But how did you get to the station?"

"In the Crefelds' car. Mr. Hope fetched me."

A gleam of surprise and annoyance crossed Rebekah-Rosamund's face for a moment but she spoke with benevolent patronage.

"Quite right. I am sure Herr Crefeld would have been willing that you should use his car. Then I suppose we may see something of you on the journey."

"But I thought you were going to Paris?"

"No. I, too, have changed my mind. I am going to London. He wishes it. When I asked him just now to take my ticket for me he said 'With pleasure.' It is astonishing how much a man can express in two words when he puts his whole heart into them."

I had no doubt of whom she was speaking and I had no doubt that one of us was living in a fool's paradise. Here was I happy in the memory of a look and here was she putting heaven knows what meaning into two formal words. The situation was absurd, undignified and, for one of us, distressing. I wanted it cleared up.

"Have you friends in London?" I asked.

"I shall have one friend," she answered fatuously. "I shall not need more."

I did not know what to say. I felt sure she was mistaken but I could not see that it was my business to tell her so. Besides she would not have believed me. I cannot remember that I felt in the least angry with her, or jealous, or even inclined to laugh. She seemed to me like a creature ridden by a hallucination from which facts would wake her roughly before long, and as I believed that I should play a part in the awakening, a part she would grudge and resent, I was in no great hurry to open her eyes. But I did wish to make sure that my own were steady.

Before either of us spoke again Mr. Hope appeared, carrying a heavy portmanteau as well as his own small suit-case.

"I am sure they will not let you travel with all this luggage," he said to Miss Campbell. "They are only allowing people to take what they can carry in their hands."

Just then the crowd made a rush in which we found ourselves involved and Mr. Hope turned to me.

"Are you sure you can keep on your feet if you take my arm?" he said, and he managed to make way for me as a tall, strong man can without hustling his neighbors unfairly or allowing them to hustle us. We soon found ourselves separated from Miss Campbell.

"Will she be all right?" I said, trying to see her behind us but finding that other travelers had pushed between.

"I hope so," he said, and then he added: "I'm going to look after you." My arm was close against his side as we pressed on and he accented what he said by holding it still more tightly to him for a moment.

"I thought she was going to Paris," I said.

"I wish she had," said he, and set my mind at rest.

When we got to the waitingroom in which passengers' luggage was weighed, we were told as we had expected that Miss Campbell's portmanteau could not go with us. And some time after we were safely in the train Miss Campbell, deprived of everything except her hold-all, found us out. She talked of nothing but her losses till we reached the Dutch frontier. All night she talked of what she had lost and of what she would claim from the city of Hamburg through her influential friends and relations and of the inconvenience she was about to suffer when she arrived in London without her possessions. Everyone in the compartment, probably everyone in the train, had suffered equally with her, but you would have thought to hear her that no one else possessed anything they cherished, or could feel inconvenienced or bereaved. She also complained loudly and often of the crowded compartment, the heat, the frequent tedious stoppages and the want of refreshments when she expected to find some. It certainly was a trying journey, for we missed our connections over and over again through having to wait at sidings while troop trains went through, and finally we missed the morning boat at Flushing, but the further we got and the more I heard other people talk of what was happening the more thankful I felt to be in a train at all, a train carrying me quite decidedly out of Germany and towards England. I listened drowsily to the talk between Mr. Hope and another Englishman opposite him and they were both agreed that if they had

waited another twelve hours they might not have got away at all. Civilian traffic would probably be stopped for a time and when it was resumed, if we had come into the war, the position of English people in Germany would be that of alien enemies, disagreeable, and in many cases, dangerous.

It was hot, it was dusty, it was noisy, and yet at intervals I slept. So did Miss Campbell, with her mouth open and snoring, but she said in the morning that she had not closed an eye all night. I felt dazed by all I had heard and seen of the war since I left Hamburg: by the sight of every station we passed crowded with gray uniforms, by the sound of those trampling feet and shouting voices, by the insolence of some Jacks-in-office who would have hauled Miss Campbell and me out of the train because we had no passports and were only prevented by Mr. Hope producing his passport and his assurance that we really were women and not fighting men in petticoats and that we were traveling with him. That was a near squeak, and I wondered what would have happened if I had been left with Miss Campbell at a German wayside station with no money in my possession except a useless English check.

"You would not have been left," said Mr. Hope. "I am going to see you safe home . . . if you are going home."

"I don't know yet where I am going," I said.

"I am in the same predicament," said Miss Campbell.

We were sitting close to each other on the deck of the steamer which was so crowded that you had to sit close to your neighbors. Luckily it was a fine

night and though we were packed like sardines the sea air refreshed and braced us after the long suffocating night and day in the trains. I think everyone felt as we did ourselves, relieved to be out of German trains and on an English boat, and though I should not have admitted it aloud I rather agreed with the girl who said she wanted to kiss all the English sailors, old and young. It was pleasant to hear one's own tongue again and to be amongst one's own people and at sea with Englishmen. We had had hot coffee and bacon for breakfast and were recovering from the alarms and excursions of our escape. Mr. Hope had steered me through the luggage laden crush of passengers hurrying from the train to the steamer and had found seats for us when there seemed to be no seats left for anyone.

"I tried to send telegrams yesterday," I explained, "but I was told that all the lines were blocked. Two were taken but no guarantee of dispatch or arrival was given. I think I shall go to Mrs. David first . . ."

"I will come with you," said Miss Campbell.

I looked at her in astonishment.

"Do you know her?" I asked.

"Not exactly," she admitted, "but the Crefelds knew her well and I come from them. At such a time as this nothing more is necessary. They are rich people. They can take me in for a few days till my plans are made."

She looked at Mr. Hope as she spoke but he looked at the sea and said nothing.

"I think if you go to the Davids I will go to my

own house in Chelsea," I said. "Perhaps two unexpected guests . . ."

"Where is your house in Chelsea?" she asked. I gave her the address. I thought perhaps she wanted it in order to return the money she had borrowed.

XLI

TIBBIE opened the door to me and her hard-featured north-country face showed as much pleasure as she ever considered it seemly to show.

"Ye've come back then?" she said, and her glance traveled towards my companion who had his back turned for the moment and was speaking to the taxi-driver.

"I thowt you would . . ." she said. "Yo're not married, are yo?"

I was afraid Quentin would hear and turned hastily to see how near he was. If he had heard, his face remained impassive as he told me that he was going on to a hotel near, but would like to see me again this afternoon.

"Could I come about tea-time?" he suggested, and I said he could.

Then Tibbie took me indoors and talked to me a little about Aunt Susan and I told her about the journey we had had and how the war was turning everything upside down already. She said she knew it because on Saturday the butcher who always cashed my checks for her refused to cash my last one, so that she had no money in the house and very little food. All the shops would be shut because it was Bank Holiday and there was nothing to be bought

but newspapers which the little boys were offering us this moment in the street below.

"GERMAN ULTIMATUM TO BELGIUM, GERMANY
AND RUSSIA."

Their shrill voices reached us through the open window of the drawing-room as we stayed there and talked. It looked just the same as on the day I left it, more than a year ago, only Aunt Susan's chair was empty and the little every-day things she had used, her spectacles, her writing-case, her ordered work-basket would never be used again. I felt her presence and the loss of her here more vividly than I had felt it yet, and I wished that she had lived to receive my confidence and rejoice with me.

"It's an awfu' thing this war," said Tibbie. "If someone don't stop it our young chaps'll be killed. Killed! I saw the Kayser last time he came over . . . on the Embankment. The old Queen would never have stood his nonsense. When he started prancing she had the navy out . . . she did. You don't remember, but I do. He's mad, he is. Who's that coming here now in a taxi . . . with luggage . . . a lady . . . looks like a furriner . . ."

I looked out of the window, too, and saw, as I knew I should, Miss Campbell with her hold-all. A prolonged resounding knock caused Tibbie to move stiffly downstairs again while I thought I knew what Sinbad the Sailor had felt like, and remember that I could not give her money to go elsewhere because I had none in my possession. She entered with a jaunty air that was a trifle forced and said that the Davids were at Brighton.

"I could not very well insist on staying in their house while they were away," she said. "I dare say many people would have done so but I preferred to come here. It cannot be for long."

I was glad to hear that but doubted the premises on which she based her conclusion.

"I'm afraid there is nothing much to eat in the house," I said. "I was not expected and it is Bank Holiday and none of us have any money . . . what can you give us, Tibbie? I'm not hungry . . . only tired. I want to go to bed for a few hours."

"Quite a sensible idea," said Miss Campbell. "After the night we had a little beauty sleep is indicated."

I give the phrases she used. I hated them unreasonably. Indicated!

"As for food," she went on graciously, "we must make the best of things. If you will give me the name of my friend's hotel I will indite a telegram which one of your servants can take to the post for me, suggesting that we should dine with him to-night."

"Bank 'Ooliday!" snapped Tibbie, who was taking Miss Campbell's measure with extreme disfavor. "Post office shut."

"But why should I be inconvenienced because the mob wants its 'oliday?" inquiry Miss Campbell, mimicking Tibbie and causing the old woman to frown more deeply than before. "However, I can telephone. I suppose you have one in the house?"

She did not try to hide her vexation and her contempt when I told her I had not, and also that I did not know the name of Mr. Hope's hotel.

"But in that case I cannot reach him and he will

look for me in Fitzjohn Avenue," she said. "How very annoying."

I did not tell her that he was coming here this afternoon because I found I could not speak of him to her. I said that I was dog-tired and wished to rest and I asked Tibbie to get our rooms ready as quickly as she could. While we waited Miss Campbell stared round the drawing-room with a depreciatory eye and told me exactly how her sister's salon in Paris was furnished and what the Persian carpet in it had cost. Her voice began to drone in my ears and I could hardly keep my eyes open, but when Tibbie returned I accompanied my self-invited guest to the spare room and made sure that everything she needed was there.

"Very nice," she said patronizingly, "but where is your bathroom? After a journey the first thing I require is a hot bath."

"Yo' can't 'ave it," said Tibbie, who stood by, "no kitchen fire."

"A caretaker, I presume," said Miss Campbell as Tibbie hobbled off. "I suppose you will get civilized servants at once."

I did not tell her that Tibbie had lived with Aunt Susan for forty years and that I had never had to do with any other servant except in other people's houses. I did not tell her, partly because I was too tired to argue and partly because I resented her tone as one's body resents a nightmare. I wanted her to go. I wanted never to see her again. I hoped Mrs. David would come soon and help me get rid of her, humanely, but for good. This was my house and she brought into it what did not belong there: ar-

rogance and ill will. I wished her pleasant dreams and escaped to my own room.

I slept for six hours and should have gone on sleeping if Tibbie had not roused me. The gentleman had called, she said, and it was tea-time. She brought me hot water and my tweed skirt well brushed and she told me she had baked scones for tea. She looked taken aback when I put my arms round her neck and kissed her. Caretaker, indeed! She was home and I had come back to her through the turmoil and the gathering clouds of war. She was safety. She was a bit of England, a sturdy faithful bit, valuable and beloved.

"Get on with yo're dressin'," she said. "I'll tak' oop tea. I've got a chicken for yo're dinner."

"How did you get it?"

"Knocked 'em oop."

"Is Miss Campbell down?"

"Naw."

Tibbie shut the door behind her with a snap and I dressed as quickly as I could. I had nothing but my tweed skirt and a clean white blouse for which I had found room in my hand-bag, but I felt clean again and rested when I went downstairs. Quentin got up to meet me. I held out my hand to him and he kept it in his. At first he did not speak so I spoke lightly because his silence made me feel shy.

"Miss Campbell is staying here," I said. "The Davids are at Brighton."

I doubt if he heard. He seemed to be occupied with his own thoughts.

"They say that Kitchener is going to ask for

100,000 men," he began surprisingly. I had not thought much about the war since I got home. I looked up at him now and my heart gave a leap towards him and answered the affection in his eyes.

"If he asks for them he must have them."

"Yes," I said.

"I shall go."

"Yes." I spoke in a lower voice then, but there was nothing else to say.

"Will you marry me? At once . . . before I go?"

"Yes."

There was nothing else to say.

XLII

J'ACCUSE," she screamed on the top notes of her voice. "J'accuse," and pointed to me, gibbering. I had left the door slightly ajar, Miss Campbell had come down unheard, had seen us and now stood on the threshold, trembling and stuttering with rage. There was tragedy in her bitter wrath but there was comedy in her audience, for as she stood there the large resplendent figures of Mrs. David and Isabella appeared behind her and passed by her as smoothly and irresistibly as two large motor cars would pass a cursing tramp. It took some time for them to enfold me in their arms as warmly and kiss me as often as they wished to do, and then I introduced Miss Campbell and Quentin. I hoped the advent of strangers would keep Miss Campbell quiet and assist her to control herself. And I did not foresee that these particular strangers, their manner, their clothes and their racial kinship would lash her into a still more furious rage.

Mrs. David looked the same as ever, big, kind, clever, amusing and opulent. Even on an August day, without furs and wearing gloves that covered her rings she managed to look splendid. So did Isabella. She had altered, I thought, both outwardly and inwardly. She looked at peace with the world, was a little stouter, and as well dressed as her mother.

"Your servants said you were at Brighton," began Miss Campbell. She had come into the room now and taken a seat. Tibbie was bringing in tea and Quentin was hovering round the tea tray ready to take round the cups I had not filled yet.

Mrs. David had rather narrow intelligent eyes that were usually full of kindness and good humor, but she could half close them and look at anyone she disliked in a withering way. She turned them on Miss Campbell now and said:

"Frau Crefeld has written to me about you. She believes that you are in Paris with your relations. Why are you here? She says that she provided you with money for your journey and for some weeks after you arrival."

I started a little at that and looked at Miss Campbell who turned as red as a boiled beet and murmured something about having her own reasons and knowing her own affairs.

"We were in Brighton this morning," said Mrs. David, turning to me, "but my husband wished to be at home. It is an anxious time for business men. No one knows what will happen. When we got back we were told that you were in London again, so Isabella and I came off at once to see you. We want you to come to us. You cannot live here alone."

Miss Campbell laughed unpleasantly, and then before any of us guessed what she was going to say she started on a tirade that began with invective and ended in a hysterical gobble. She probably hardly spoke two minutes but it seemed to me that she would go on forever.

"J'accuse!" she began again. "J'accuse! That

creature has stolen my lover. She is a Messalina, a coquette. We understood each other till she came and snatched him from me. I am not ashamed to say so although he sits there . . . it is he who should look ashamed. I wish him joy of Caspar Heiling's cast-off . . ."

"Stop!" said Quentin, and she did stop for the moment with that catch in her throat that is neither a sob nor a laugh, but both together and most disagreeable.

"*Meschugge*," said Mrs. David, tapping her head significantly. "Jacob Cohen's child. *So ist es*."

"*Meschugge* yourself," cried Miss Campbell violently, all the Whitechapel in her finding sudden vent. "Can she deny it? Can she deny that I found Caspar Heiling with her at ten o'clock at night?"

"But I don't want to deny it," I said. "He had called."

"Respectable women do not receive visits from young men of his reputation at ten o'clock at night."

"But if a respectable woman is in a flat by herself with some children and the bell rings and she goes to the door . . ." I began when Quentin stopped me.

"There is no need for you to explain what happened," he said. "I have heard the whole story before."

"So have I," said Mrs. David unexpectedly. "Frau Crefeld told me about it in her letter and said this woman had been doing her best to slander you. That is why I was surprised to find her in your house as your guest. She also told me . . ."

She hesitated. She looked at Quentin. She touched her forehead again.

"Meschugge," she said once more, but this time she spoke in an undertone and perhaps Miss Campbell did not hear her. She stood a little away from us and seemed to crumple as a child's balloon does when it is pricked. I could not help feeling sorry for her. She had treated me badly, but I had everything and she had nothing. Even her evil mind had not done much harm to anyone except herself.

"I shall go to Paris," she said suddenly.

"It is the best thing you can do," said Mrs. David.

"At once."

"By to-night's boat."

"I must be with my own people in the hour of danger."

"Certainly."

"But I have no money left. Someone must lend me money."

There was very nearly an unseemly rush. I began to speak, Quentin put his hand in his pocket, Mrs. David said money should be provided.

"Checks are no use to-day," Isabella reminded us. "But I have enough gold at home. If Miss Campbell will pack her things and come back with me . . ."

"I have no things. They have all been stolen," said Miss Campbell, but she went out of the room to see to her hold-all.

"Frau Crefeld gave her thirty pounds," said Mrs. David.

"Perhaps she had debts," I suggested. "I gave her ten for her journey."

"I bought her ticket," said Quentin.

"I shall buy her one to Paris to-night," said Isabella.

"She will arrive in Paris with a comfortable little nest-egg," said Mrs. David. "It is just as well. She may have to run away in a hurry from the Boche. I wish her no harm but I shall be glad when she has gone."

"So shall I," said Quentin squarely.

"She is Jacob Cohen's daughter," said Mrs. David. "To me that explains a great deal. I knew him. He was a violent Red and would have slit the throat of everyone in what he called the bourgeoisie. By the bourgeoisie he meant people who succeed in life. He was a complete failure. Any money he got he squandered. His wife died in a garret and his children were often starving. That terrible temperament, envious, vain, arrogant, this woman inherits."

We listened in silence, trying to recover from the painful impressions of the recent scene. Isabella brought us away from it by asking me if I had made up my mind what to do. I looked at Quentin.

"We are going to be married," he said.

You can imagine what ensued. Congratulations, questions, embraces, but not the degree of surprise I had expected.

"Frau Crefeld told me it was likely," said Mrs. David. "She knew that I was deeply attached to you. You must be married from our house."

Isabella's eyes met mine with understanding. She knew as her mother did not, what was in the minds of our generation in this hour and how every marriage for years to come would be celebrated in shadow and in sunshine inextricably mingled.

"If men are needed Ernest will go," she said to me in a low voice.

Then Miss Campbell reappeared and looked more herself than she had done for some time. She spoke to Mrs. David first and intimated that she was ready and anxious to shake the dust of London off her shoes.

"I never felt really at home anywhere except in Paris," she said. "I hope I shall be able to get a wire through to my sister. She is very easily upset and if I arrived suddenly well . . . *La Joie fait Peur.*"

"I think you'll have to risk it," said Mrs. David, twinkling at me. "You can send a wire but whether it will get through . . . I've not had Sally's yet."

Miss Campbell then made her exit. She allowed Mrs. David and Isabella to precede her downstairs, stood for a moment at the doorway staring at Quentin and me, made a gesture—I grieve to relate as if she were spitting at us, said *Pfui* twice in a clear voice and turned her back on us forever. Quentin shut the door after her, opened the window wider and watched the car depart.

"What a horrible experience!" he said.

"For me?"

"For you! No. For me. What could anything she said matter to you?"

"But Quentin . . . listen . . . I must tell you . . . It was true. She did find Herr Heiling in the flat at ten o'clock one night. He ought not to have come at that hour . . . but he did."

Quentin hardly listened, hardly took an interest.

"You never cared for him," he said.

"I thought I did . . . for a time."

"Not as you care for me!"

"How do you know?"

"I do know."

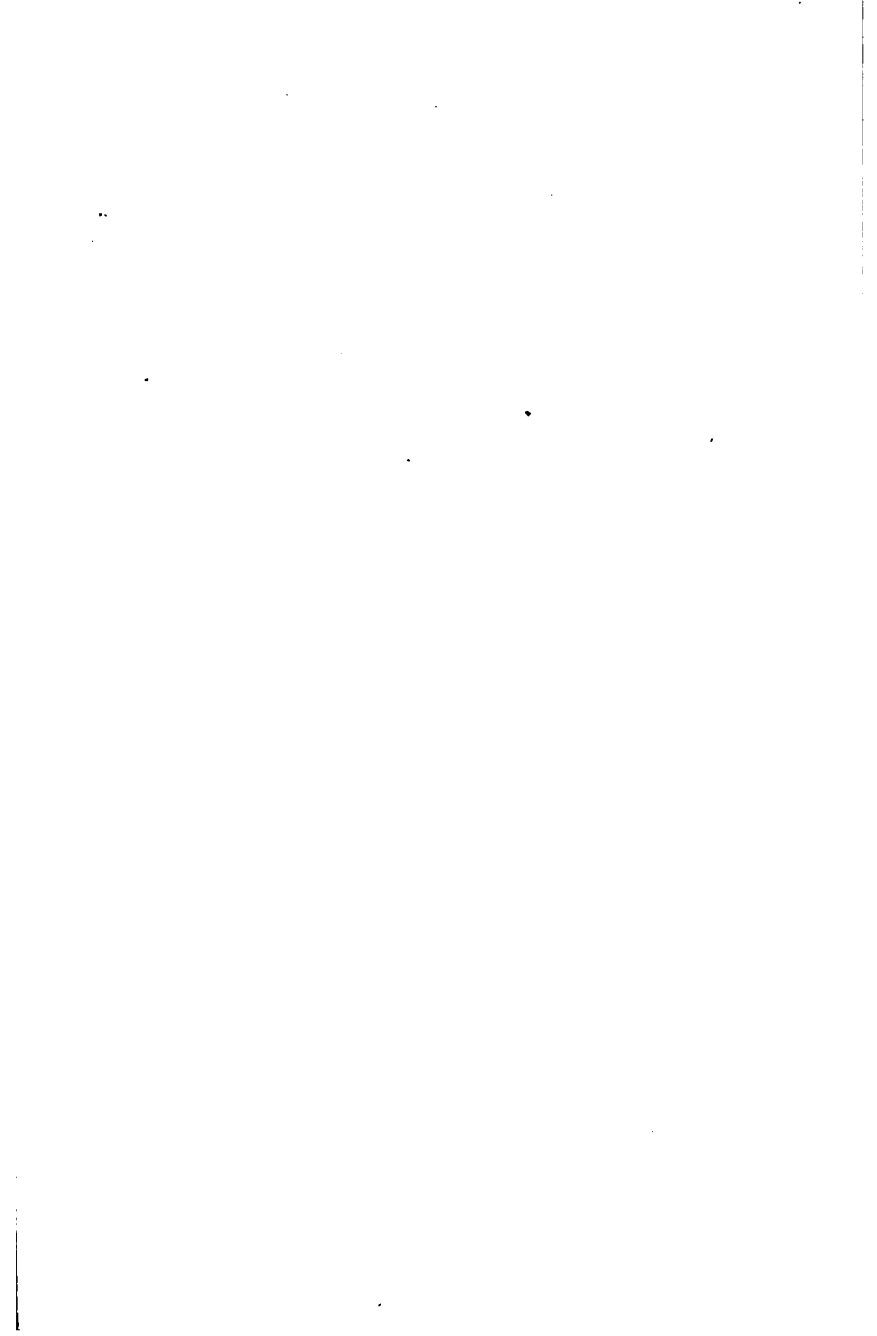
We stood by the window together, happy and at peace. In the high road beyond the Square we heard the voices of the paper boys and the rumble of traffic. The future hid its face from us but we had the present hour and that gave us our heart's desire.

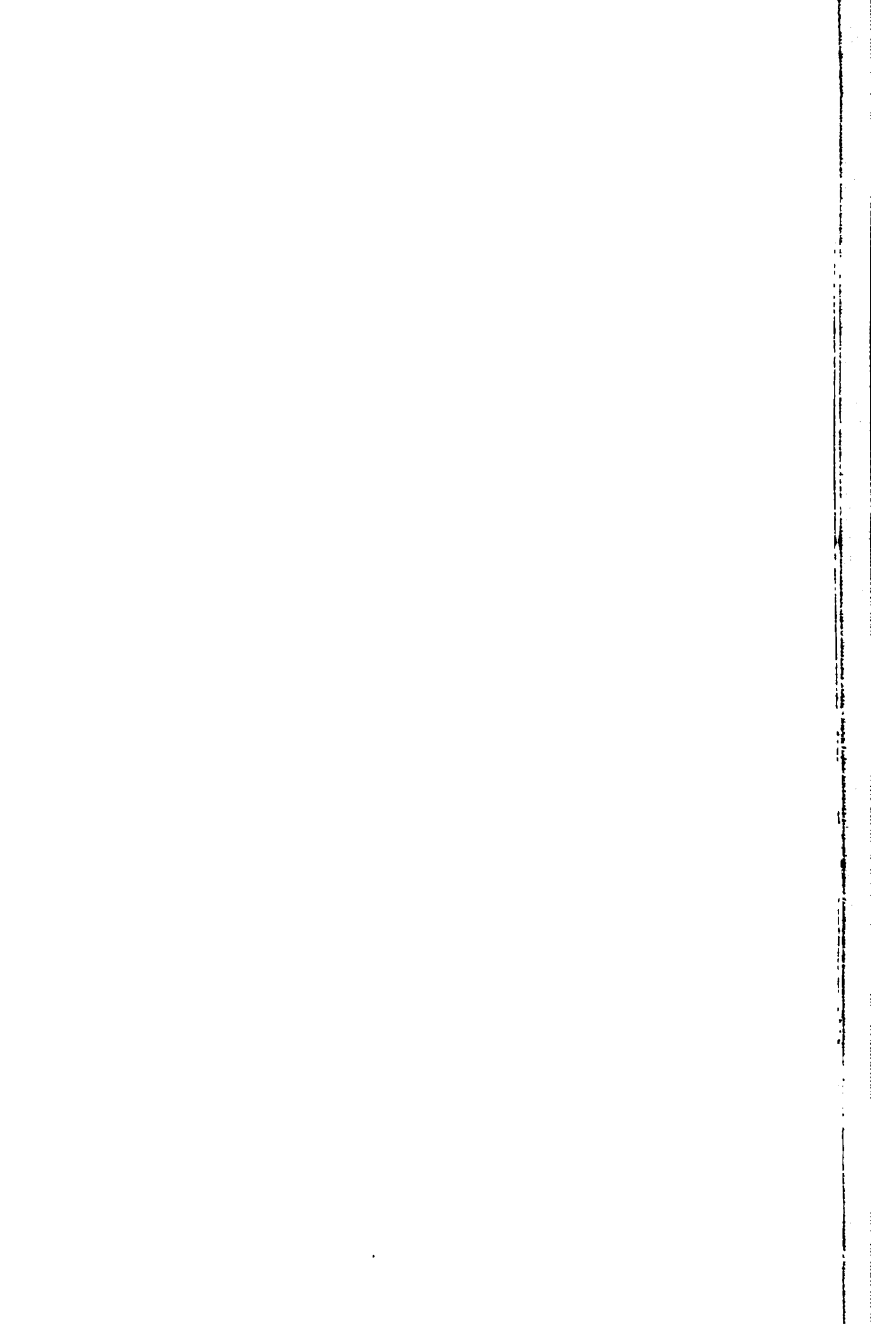
"We will be married very quickly and quietly," said Quentin, "not from anyone's house and not with flags flying. We will go away together . . . until I am called. You will come, Sally."

I said I would.

THE END.

SW









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